

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle:
they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for
what is right:
they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the
cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

1 February 2026

Today's liturgy proclaims a beautiful passage from the Good News that Jesus announces to all humanity: the Gospel of the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12). These are, in fact, lights that the Lord kindles in the darkness of history, revealing the plan of salvation that the Father accomplishes through the Son, with the power of the Holy Spirit.

On the mountain, Christ gives his disciples the new law, no longer written on stone. It is a law that renews our lives and makes them good, even when the world seems to have failed us and is full of misery. Only God can truly call the poor and afflicted blessed (cf. vv. 3-4), because he is the highest good who gives himself to all with infinite love. Only God can satisfy those who seek peace and justice (cf. vv. 6-9), because he is the

just judge of the world and the author of eternal peace. Only in God do the meek, the merciful and the pure of heart find joy (vv. 5-7-8), because he is the fulfilment of their expectations. In persecution, God is the source of redemption; in falsehood, he is the anchor of truth. Therefore, Jesus proclaims: "Rejoice and be glad!" (v. 12).

These Beatitudes remain a paradox only for those who believe that God is other than how Christ reveals him. Those who expect the arrogant to always rule the earth are surprised by the Lord's words. Those who are accustomed to thinking that happiness belongs to the rich may believe that Jesus is deluded. However, the delusion lies precisely in the lack of faith in Christ. He is the poor man who shares his life with everyone, the meek man who perseveres in suffering, the peacemaker persecuted to death on the cross.

In this way, Jesus illuminates the meaning of history. It is no longer written by conquerors, but rather by God, who is able to accomplish it by saving the oppressed. The Son looks at the world through the Father's love. On the other hand, as Pope Francis said, there are "the experts in illusion. We should not follow them because they are unable to give us hope" (Angelus, 17 February 2019). Instead, God gives this hope primarily to those whom the world dismisses as hopeless.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, the Beatitudes become for us a measure of happiness, leading us to ask whether we consider it an achievement to be bought or a gift to be shared; whether we place it in objects that are consumed or in relationships that accompany us. It is in fact because of Christ (cf. Mt 5:11) and thanks to him that the bitterness of trials is transformed into the joy of the redeemed. Jesus does not speak of a distant consolation, but of a constant grace that always sustains us, especially in times of affliction.

The Beatitudes lift up the humble and disperse the proud in their inmost thoughts (cf. Lk 1:51). Therefore, we ask for the intercession of the Virgin Mary, servant of the Lord, whom all generations call blessed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Why do you think Jesus' understanding of happiness in the Beatitudes is so different from the way happiness is usually described today?



Heart: Which Beatitude challenges or unsettles you the most — and what does that reveal about where you tend to look for happiness?



Hands: Which Beatitude do you sense God inviting you to take seriously right now — not as an ideal, but as a way of seeing yourself, others, or your situation differently — and what would need to change in you for that to happen?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.