

GOSPEL
*Matthew 25:1-13**

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 BY POPE BENEDICT XVI
1 November 2020

On this solemn Feast of All Saints, the Church invites us to reflect on the great hope, that is based on Christ’s Resurrection: Christ is risen and we will also be with him. The Saints and Blesseds are the most authoritative witnesses of Christian hope, because they lived it fully in their lives, amidst joys and sufferings, putting into practice the Beatitudes that Jesus preached and which resound in the Liturgy today (cf. Mt 5:1-12a). The evangelical Beatitudes, in fact, are the path to holiness. I will focus now on two Beatitudes, the second and the third.

This is the second one: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4). These words seem contradictory because mourning is not a sign of joy and happiness. Death, illness, moral adversity, sin and mistakes are reasons for mourning

and suffering: simply everyday life, fragile, weak and marked by difficulty, a life at times wounded and pained by ingratitude and misunderstanding. Jesus proclaims blessed those who mourn due to this reality, who trust in the Lord despite everything and put themselves under his shadow. They are not indifferent, nor do they harden their hearts in their suffering, but they patiently hope for God’s comfort. And they experience this comfort already in this life.

In the third Beatitude, Jesus states: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (v. 5). Brothers and sisters, meekness! Meekness is characteristic of Jesus, who said of himself: “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (Mt 11:29). The meek are those who know how to control themselves, who leave space for others, who listen to them and respect their way of living, their needs and their requests. They do not intend to overwhelm or diminish the other; they do not want to tower over or dominate everything, nor impose their ideas or their own interests to the detriment of others. These people, unappreciated by the worldly mentality, are, instead, precious in the eyes of God who gives them the promised land as an inheritance, that is, eternal life. This beatitude too begins here below and will be fulfilled in Heaven, in Christ. Meekness. At this moment in life, even in the world, where there is much aggressiveness..., in everyday life as well, the first thing that comes out of us is aggression, defensiveness. We need meekness to move forward on the path of holiness. To listen, to respect, not to attack: meekness.

Dear brothers and sisters, choosing purity, meekness and mercy; choosing to entrust oneself to the Lord in poverty of spirit and in affliction; dedicating oneself to justice and peace — all this means going against the current in respect to this world’s mindset, in respect to the culture of possession, of meaningless fun, of arrogance against the weakest. This evangelical path was trodden by the Saints and Blesseds. Today’s solemnity that honours All Saints reminds us of the personal and universal vocation to holiness, and proposes sure models for this journey that each person walks in a unique way, an unrepeatable way. It is enough to think of the inexhaustible variety of

continued over page ►

gifts and real life stories there are among the saints: they are not all the same, each one has their own personality, and developed their own life of holiness according to their own personality. Each one of us can do it, take this path: meekness, meekness, please, and we will head toward holiness.

This immense family of faithful disciples of Christ has a Mother, the Virgin Mary. We venerate her under the title Queen of All Saints; but she is first of all the Mother who teaches each one of us to welcome and follow her Son. May she help us nourish the desire for holiness, walking the way of the Beatitudes.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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



Head: Pope Benedict XVI says the Beatitudes are “the path to holiness”. Which Beatitude do you find most attractive, and which do you find most challenging?



Heart: Where in your life right now is Jesus inviting you to choose meekness, trust, mercy, or peace instead of reacting the way the world would?



Hands: What is one practical way you can live a Beatitude this week, especially towards someone who is difficult to love, understand, or forgive?

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 (for example, “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’.