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Commentary on the Gospel: All Saints

Gospel for the Solemnity of All Saints (Cycle A), and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 5:1-12a*)

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Commentary:

Today the Church commemorates all those persons who lived in friendship with God on their earthly journey and entered through it into his glory. Some saints are raised to the altars as models of virtue and love for God. But many others left an imprint of sanctity day after day that perhaps passed unnoticed to human eyes, but that never escaped the attentive and loving eyes of God.

As Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, Prelate of Opus Dei, said: “All Saints Day is the feast of that quiet and simple sanctity—sanctity without any human splendor—which seems to leave no trace in history, but shines forth before God. It leaves behind in the world a sowing of Love from which nothing is lost.”[1]

For the Gospel of today's Mass, the liturgy chose the passage of the beatitudes according to Saint Matthew. Thus it underlines the fact that these are the equivalent of sanctity, both of the sanctity that makes some people famous, so to speak, and the sanctity that is only fully revealed in heaven.

The Gospels present two versions of Jesus' discourse on the beatitudes: that of Luke, with its four beatitudes and four "woes" mirroring them, and that of Matthew, which includes nine beatitudes. Matthew shows us Jesus teaching the people while they are seated on the slopes of a mountain, thus recalling Moses who delivered the tablets of the Law to the Israelites after being with God on Mount Sinai. Jesus teaches the people with authority on the mountain, in order to bring the first law to its fulness and invite all men and women to be

perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (cf. *Mt* 5:48).

Each of the beatitudes, with its disconcerting language, has given rise to numerous commentaries throughout the Church's history. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sums these up by saying that, above all, the beatitudes “depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity.”^[2] Jesus is the principal blessed and happy One, because he lived on this earth in loving union with the Father, which is the greatest happiness, above any tribulation.

Thus the beatitudes are a compendium of sanctity and a call to it. “They shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and

rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.”[3]

Jesus invites us, Pope Francis says, “to set out on the way of the Beatitudes. It is not a matter of doing extraordinary things, but of following each day this way that leads us to heaven, leads us to our family, leads us home. Thus today we glimpse our future and we celebrate what we were born for: we were born so as to die no more; we were born to enjoy God's happiness! The Lord encourages us and says to those setting out on the path of the Beatitudes: ‘Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven’ (*Mt* 5:12). May the Holy Mother of God, Queen of Saints, help us to decisively follow the road to holiness. May she who is the Gate of Heaven introduce our departed loved ones into the heavenly family.”[4]

[1] *Message from the Prelate*, 1
November 2017.

[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
no. 1717.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 1
November 2018.

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