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Monday's Gospel: The Beatitudes

Gospel for Monday in the 10th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 5:1-12*)

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

The list of the Beatitudes is a passage of great beauty that forms the heart of the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus sits down, as a teacher, to instruct the people in the divine Word that he brings from the Father. He begins by saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

We need to pay close attention and be amazed once again that Jesus’ first word is “blessed,” which means happy.

Jesus, in bringing us the Word of God, teaches us that he wants us to be happy, blessed, with the fullness of life. He tells us that the path leading to God is a path of joy. With his Word, he describes for us the path to true happiness.

But when reading the beatitudes we discover that this is a paradoxical path. Jesus shows us that the path to happiness involves traversing places where we would not have expected to find it.

Every beatitude involves a path of love and also the Cross. Jesus teaches us that, in this world, love and the Cross are closely identified. Or in other words, if we truly want to love, we must identify ourselves with the Cross.

Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, that is, those who live with trust in God; those who mourn, that is, those who know how to recognize and repent of their sins; those who are meek, that is, those who know how to patiently bear the defects of others; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, that is, those who grow in their desire for holiness; those who are merciful, that

is, those who welcome others in their fragility without judging them; those who are pure in heart, that is, those who strive to ensure that nothing tarnishes their ability to love; those who are peacemakers, that is, those who strive to sow peace and joy; and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, that is, those who live in the truth without making compromises.

In the beatitudes we discover Jesus' face and also need to discover our own. It can be very helpful to confront our own life with the beatitudes. Asking ourselves: Am I truly poor? Do I mourn? – considering each of them in light of our own life.

Javier Massa

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