

Homily > OT VI © > Feb 16, 2025 > Embracing the Beatitudes

True happiness, or "beatitude," lies not in the accumulation of wealth, health, or power, but in living according to the heart of God. As Jesus teaches us in the Gospel, the way to true joy and fulfillment is through a spirit of humble selflessness and compassion—a commitment to love and uplift those in need, just as He did.

The word “beatitude” also means "blessedness," and it has a double meaning: both receiving God’s favor and experiencing supreme happiness. But this happiness isn’t about comfort or material success. It’s about knowing and living as children of a loving Heavenly Father, and it’s only when we share our blessings with those in need that we will truly find fulfillment.

In our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah tells us that true happiness comes from placing our trust in God and His promises. Jeremiah contrasts the person who trusts in human things—like wealth or power—with the one who trusts in the Lord. The one who trusts in God is like a tree planted by water, flourishing in every season, no matter the circumstances.

This echoes the message of today’s Responsorial Psalm: “Blessed is the one who follows not the counsel of the wicked, but delights in the law of the Lord.” True happiness is found in following God’s ways, in living a life centered on His will, and in finding joy in His promises.

St. Paul, in the second reading, reminds us that while true beatitude cannot be fully realized in this life, we have the assurance that through Christ’s Resurrection, we are destined for

a life of eternal happiness in Heaven. In the here and now, we may experience struggles and suffering, but these are not the end of the story. The fullness of our joy is to come, and it is promised to us by the risen Christ.

In today's Gospel, Jesus flips our understanding of happiness upside down. He tells His disciples that the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, and the persecuted are "blessed." But this doesn't mean that poverty, hunger, and suffering are inherently good. Rather, they become a means through which we discover God's providence, reconciliation, and strength. When we experience poverty or hunger, we are reminded of our dependence on God. When we weep for our sins, we open ourselves to God's mercy. And when we face persecution for our faith, we stand with Christ in the hope of eternal glory.

What makes these experiences "blessed" is not the suffering itself, but the way we live them in the context of our relationship with Jesus. The Beatitudes invite us to live with humble selflessness, seeking to care for the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed, just as Jesus did. They are not just abstract teachings; they are a call to action, a summons to serve others with generosity and compassion.

We are called by Jesus to respond to the challenge of the Beatitudes in our daily lives. There are millions around the world who are suffering: the starving, the homeless, the persecuted, the sick, and those who feel hopeless. We are the hands and feet of Christ, and it is through our actions that the promises of the Beatitudes can become a reality for those who are suffering. Each time we reach out to help, whether it's with food, shelter, or love,

we bring a little bit of Heaven to Earth. We share with others the foretaste of the blessings that Jesus promises.

In an age of accusation, it's easy to point fingers at political systems or social structures, but God calls us to act, to do something. If half of our children were hungry, cold, and uneducated, what would we do? We wouldn't wait for someone else to fix it. We would act. God wants us to live as brothers and sisters who care for one another, and it starts with us. Let us be the ones who light a candle instead of complaining about the darkness.

Let us, then, take up the challenge of the Beatitudes. Let us follow the path of life that Jesus lays before us: the path of humble service, compassionate care, and selfless generosity. By doing so, we will not only experience true happiness, but we will also bring the light of Christ into a world that so desperately needs it.

May the Lord bless us all with the grace to live the Beatitudes each day, and may we find true happiness in being instruments of His love.