

Link to Liturgy



4th Sunday of Ordinary Time The Beatitudes

Lessons and Discussions

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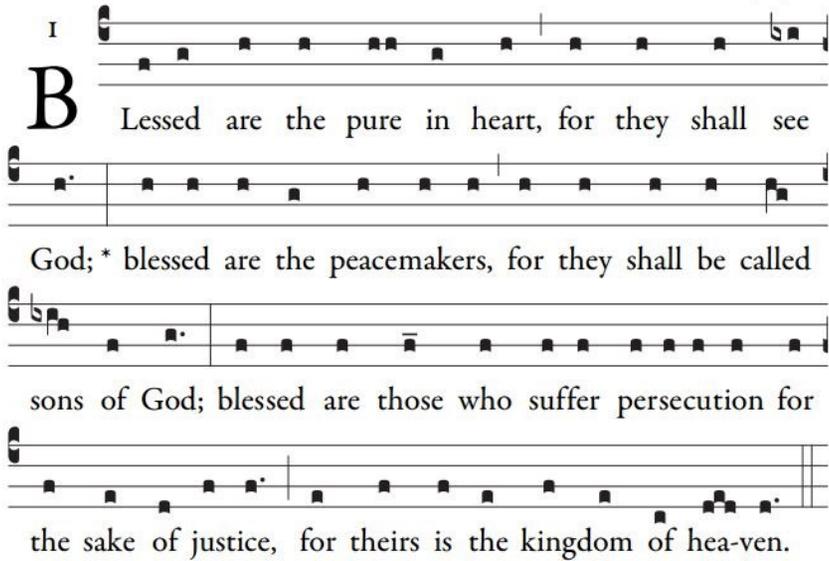


Communion Antiphon (Mt 5: 8,9,10) – Roman Missal

Should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

*Beati mundo corde**Mt 5: 8, 9, 10*

I



B Lessed 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 suffer persecution for
 the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of hea-ven.

Source: <http://www.ccwatershed.org>

Alternate options:Hymns

All Creatures of Our God and King

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

Rejoice the Lord Is King

Praise Songs

More than Enough (Chris Tomlin)

We Fall Down (Chris Tomlin)

We are Hungry (Brad Kilman)

Remnant Band

Psalm 63

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen

Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honor you with all our mind
and love everyone in truth of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Matthew 5:1-12 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
- Glory to you O Lord

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

From Pope Benedict XVI

The Beatitudes express the meaning of discipleship... What the Beatitudes mean cannot be expressed in purely theoretical terms; it is proclaimed in the life and suffering, and in the mysterious joy, of the disciple who gives himself over completely to following the Lord. The beatitudes demonstrate conclusively how God, in choosing the weak of the world, “shames the strong”.

Therefore, with great certainty and conviction we, “the humble of the earth”, from the stance of our utter nothingness “seek the Lord.” For it is due to him that we are in Christ Jesus – through his gaze on the mountain we become like him.

Responsory

We give thanks to you, O God, as we call upon your name.
– We give thanks to you, O God, as we call upon your name.

We cry aloud how marvelous you are,
– as we call upon your name.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
– We give thanks to you, O God, as we call upon your name.

Beatitude: The desire for happiness – Lesson and Discussion

What is Beatitude?

The word beatitude comes from Latin *beatitudo*, which means a state of being happy or blessed. Beatitude means the perfect good of an intellectual nature since happiness is the final end of intellectual beings. God is the most perfect good and He possesses the fullness of intelligence, thus, beatitude is most properly applied to Him.[1] A supernatural beatitude is the perfect happiness enjoyed by a nature raised by grace and the light of glory to the eternal vision of God.[2]

What do the Beatitudes do?

The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence.[3] We seek happiness here on this earth, and when we seek this happiness we are truly seeking God who is happiness. God calls each of us individually to his own beatitude (or happiness). He also calls the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in truth.[4] In naming those people who are truly happy and blessed, Jesus means to reveal our mistaken view of what we think is necessary for happiness. It is not blessed are those who are rich in gold, or great in power, dignity, and fame. Rather, it is quite the opposite types of people that Jesus names as happy.

How can the Beatitudes make us happy?

The Beatitudes told by Jesus Christ promise us all happiness if

[51] Lk. 2:14; Jn. 14:27

[52] The Church's Year pg. 722

[53] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199

[54] John 10:10

[55] 2 Tim. 3:12

[56] The Church's Year pg. 722

[57] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199

“The End” Notes

- [1] Thomas Aquinas; Summa Theologica Prima Pars, Q. 26, A.1, Respondeo
 [2] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg.58
 [3] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1719
 [4] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1719
 [5] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 58
 [6] 2 Pet 1:4; Jn 17:3
 [7] Rom 8:18
 [8] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1721
 [9] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1722
 [10] Mt 3:13; 4
 [11] Mt 4:18
 [12] Augustinus, *The Preaching of Augustine: Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, '2
 [13] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; Basic Catholic Catechism Course; page 75
 [14] Fr. Francis Fernandez; In Conversation with God Vol. 3; 25.2
 [15] J. Orlandis, The Eight Beatitudes
 [16] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1717
 [17] Augustinus, *The Preaching of Augustine: Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, '1
 [18] Luke 2:34
 [19] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1716
 [20] The Navaree Bible, note to Matt 5:2
 [21] Fr. Francis Fernandez; In Conversation with God Vol. 3; 25.1
 [22] New American Bible note to Mt. pg. 16
 [23] ibidem
 [24] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [25] Luke 1:46-47
 [26] The Church's Year pg. 720-721
 [27] The Church's Year pg. 721
 [28] Rev. 21:4
 [29] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [30] New American Bible Mt. pg. 16
 [31] The Church's Year pg. 721
 [32] Prov. 16:32
 [33] The Penny Catechism; The Christian's Daily Exercise; Question 347
 [34] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [35] New American Bible note to Mt. 3:14-15
 [36] The Church's Year. pg. 721
 [37] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [38] John 4:34
 [39] J. Escriva, Friends of God, 294
 [40] Fr. Francis Fernandez; In Conversation with God Vol. 3; 25.1
 [41] The Church's Year pg. 721-722
 [42] The Church's Year pg. 722
 [43] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [44] New American Bible note to Mt. 5:8
 [45] The Church's Year pg. 722
 [46] Psalm 51:7
 [47] St. Alphonsus Liguori; Stations of the Cross; The Sixth Station
 [48] The Church's Year pg. 722
 [49] Peter Kreeft; Catholic Christianity; page 199
 [50] Rom. 15:33

we order our lives according to the dispositions that are present in the beatitudes. By following the Beatitudes we are following Christ's divine example.[5] By following his ways we are following in the ways of perfection, which will lead us to ultimate happiness or pure joy.

God has put us on this earth to know, love, and serve him. Since, as we saw earlier, beatitude belongs most properly to God, the more we strive to reach true beatitude we are actually striving towards God. By living out the Beatitudes we come to know God by contemplating on that which He names as happy, we love God more as we make the conscious choice to love others more, and we serve God by surrendering our lives to Him. Beatitude makes us “partakers of the divine nature” and of eternal life.[6] With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ[7] and into the joy of the Trinitarian life.[8]

SONG - Happy is a Yuppie Word” by Switchfoot - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 4:58

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pen1SgiIPt>

Yuppie means someone who is spoiled or has a much higher income of living. In today's terms it's upper middle class. What the songwriter is saying is our culture today sees “happy” as being yuppie, or full of riches and wealth. However, Christ says the opposite in the Beatitudes today, and that's why the songwriter references the Beatitudes when he says, “Blessed is the man who's lost it all.”

The Beatitudes are too hard to follow.

The beatitudes surpass the understanding and intellectual powers of man. They come directly from the Word of God made flesh. The beatitudes are a gift from Him, and are completely given to us by his own charity.[9] When we consciously choose to follow the beatitudes we are given an abundance of grace. Including the grace of perseverance to follow the beatitudes even when they are difficult to follow.

When did Jesus preach about the Beatitudes?

After the baptism and temptation of Christ,[10] he calls his apostles and disciples,[11] and begins his whole ministry by teaching the Beatitudes first. The beatitudes are the New Law that Jesus teaches during the Sermon on the Mount. The mountain where the Sermon on the Mount occurs signifies “the greater precepts of righteousness” compared to the lesser ones given to the Jews.[12] The mountain imagery recalls Mt. Sinai where

God gave the Law to Moses; these precepts were lesser to the extent that they were commands that were only partially lived out. Jesus reassures the audience in Matthew 5:17 that he has not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. “They may be called the eight commandments of the New Law where each commandment carries the promise of a distinctive form of happiness. To be stressed is the fact that all the faithful, no matter what their state in life, are to practice the Beatitudes.”[13]

It is also interesting to note that Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God on Mt. Sinai and then comes down to present them to the Jews. On the other hand, Jesus goes up on the mountain and brings his disciples and followers up the mountain with him to teach them. The significance here is that the mediator between God and man is no longer simply a man (Moses) but now one who is true God and true man. The Beatitudes are the first words that Jesus chooses to preach at this, his first public ministry in Matthew.

Is Jesus saying we should seek out suffering and pain?

No. We do not need to go and seek out pain, persecution, or suffering. Those things will find us all at some point in our lives. It doesn't displease God by trying to find ways of overcoming pain, poverty, or injustice either; however the Beatitudes teach us that the real success of our lives is to love and fulfill God's Will for us.[14] The Beatitudes are an invitation to an upright and worthy life.[15] The Beatitudes speak about having the proper interior disposition in every aspect of our lives and about acting in certain ways.

Why did he start his preaching with the Beatitudes?

The Beatitudes are the foundation of which we need to live and follow Christ. They are the realization of hope for which his followers had been longing. “The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity...they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life.”[16]

Jesus presents the Beatitudes as rewards for a life of proper actions and dispositions. Augustine argues that within the Sermon on the Mount one finds “the perfect measure of the Christian life.”[17] This comes from Jesus' tri-partite explanation of what a disciple is, how they should act, and the reward that will come from these actions. If a man can follow these precepts of Jesus,

Marian Antiphon – Ave Regina Caelorum

6.

A -ve Regína caelórum, * Ave Dómina Ange-lórum :

Sálve rádix, sálve pórtá, Ex qua mundo lux est órta :

Gáude Vírgo glo-ri- ósa, Su-per ómnes spe-ci- ósa : Vále,

o valde decó-ra, Et pro nó-bis Chrístum exó-ra.

V. Dignare me laudare te Virgo sacrata.

R. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.

English Translation

Hail, Queen of Heaven; hail, Mistress of the Angels; hail, root of Jesse; hail, the gate through which the Light rose over the earth.

Rejoice, Virgin most renowned and of unsurpassed beauty. Farewell, Lady most comely. Prevail upon Christ to pity us.

V. Let me praise thee, most holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, defense to our weakness; that we who now celebrate the memory of the holy Mother of God may, by the aid of her intercession, rise again from our sins. Amen

We are deprived of goods each day. Many people know that they will be deprived of money due to taxes, food, and basic necessities. So they want to consume an inordinate amount of goods just in case goods are taken away. **How does the pursuit of worldly goods, sometimes become more of a priority than faith and morals?** Someone could work so much to obtain goods and security, that they neglect their religion and neglect their family and friends. A married couple could not want children out of the fear that they will not be secure or have the worldly goods they desire. A Christian under attack for their faith may deny their faith and morals out of fear of losing their life or even losing popularity.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Take, Lord and Receive

This prayer is found in the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The beatitudes strip us of our self. We cannot live the beatitudes if we are not willing to give all, to surrender all to God. By praying this prayer daily and prayers like it, we begin to believe what we pray (to believe that the beatitudes are possible). Once we believe what we pray, we then begin to live what we believe, thus becoming people of the beatitudes.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will.
All I have and call my own. Whatever I have or hold, you have given me. I return it all to you and surrender it wholly to be governed by your will. Give me only your love and your grace and I am rich enough and ask for nothing more.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

he will be a perfect example of a true Christian. He bases this on the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 7:24-27 where Jesus describes the two foundations upon which a man can build his house, rock or sand. The man who shapes his life according to the words Jesus spoke on the mountain is like the man who built his house on rock, he has accomplished God's Will in his life and has an unshakeable foundation. On the other hand, the man who builds his house on sand, disregarding Jesus' words, is a fool whose house is doomed to fall.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Turin, Italy (1901-1925)

Blessed Pier Giorgio has been called the "Man of the Beatitudes." The Beatitudes are an outline of the Christian life. It is the faith and life that we must defend. The Beatitudes call us to renounce self and live for Christ. At the presentation of Our Lord in the temple, Simeon said that Jesus would be a "sign that is spoken against".[18] The Beatitudes, like Christ, are a sign of contradiction to our world. In fact, they are sometimes the direct opposite of what we see lived out and pursued. Blessed Pier Giorgio said, "To live without faith, without a patrimony to defend, without a steady struggle for truth, that is not living, but existing." By living out the Beatitudes, we are defending our faith and struggling for truth against what is the norm. We are truly living, not just existing and going with the flow.

The Beatitudes: Part I – Lesson and Discussion

The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them, no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven.[19]

Yet, at that time it was hard for his disciples to hear these teachings. All their life they had been told that if they had wealth or good fortunes on earth that meant God was in favor with them, and if they were poor, sick, or outcasts then God had punished them.[20] But here, Christ tells his followers and us that though there are tribulations by following the way of the Beatitudes, they will bring us hope and true happiness.[21]

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

The poor here refers to those who have little to no material possessions, but who live with their confidence in God. When we see

‘poor in spirit,’ we must realize that it means that no matter what a person’s social rank is they can inherit heaven if their dependence is completely for God.[22] When someone is poor physically, they desire food and money, temporal things. When someone is poor in spirit, they desire God, spiritual and eternal things. Psalm 63 captures the attitude of the soul that is poor in spirit, “O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.” Poor in spirit can also mean being poor in our inner lives, not puffed up with pride in our spiritual riches like the Pharisees but honest about how much we are lacking and how much we need God’s help.

TV AD – “DirecTV Opulence” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 0:32

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkB9OT2XVv>

In the commercial the Russian has everything, and all he can do is want more, more, more. However, Jesus tells us even with all that you will not find happiness because you keep searching for more. “Only serving God brings happiness to man...And on the other hand a man can be desperately unhappy even though he lives surrounded by opulence and posses all earthly goods.[23]

Pride is self-assertion and selfishness (the opposite of poverty of spirit, which is humility and selflessness).[24] Many times we act as if we can save ourselves, as if we have the ability to take care of all our own needs. Conversely, poverty of spirit is recognition of the fact that we cannot take care of our needs on our own; it is reliance on God for all. When are truly poor in spirit, our souls begin to understand the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary, “My soul proclaims the glory of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.”[25] The Church is reminded of this beatitude as it prays the Cantic of Mary each day during Evening Prayer.

Quick Reflection:

Do I still trust the will of God even when misfortunes or injustices happen to me? Do I strive for greater fortune or higher positions by unlawful means, or would I rather suffer? Do I love my riches and wealth more than God (i.e. Greed)?[26]

If we live our life detached of the love of wealth and money, we will gain everything we ever wanted in Heaven. It is a mistake to think that money will solve all of our problems and make us tru-

Lust cannot wait to get while love can always wait to give.

VII “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called children of God.”

Peacemakers are not just the ones who help others as a third party, but are able to bring peace within their own souls. Those who guard their improper desires, who are careful to have peace in their conscience and regulate tranquility in all their actions, who do not quarrel with their neighbors, and are submissive to the will of God are children of God, because they follow God who is a God of peace[50], and who even gave His only Son to reconcile the world, and bring upon earth that peace which the world does not know and cannot give[51].[52]

Wrath [Anger] wills harm and destruction (the opposite of peace-making, which prevents destruction).[53] The worst destruction is the destruction not of a temporal thing, but the destruction of the soul. Jesus warns us that, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”[54] Peacemakers prevent destruction, we should be concerned and be on guard the neither our soul or the souls around us are destroyed. Preservation of the soul brings peace.

VIII “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

As St. Paul wrote to Timothy, “...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.”[55] By suffering persecution, means by their words, writings, or their very life defending the truth, the faith, and Christian virtues, and suffer hatred, contempt, disgrace, injury, and injustice from the world.[56] By doing this, we will receive the crown of the saints. If we endure all this with patience and perseverance, then we become like the saints, and thus like the saints receive are heavenly reward.

Gluttony wants to consume an inordinate amount of worldly goods (the opposite of being persecuted, which is to be deprived of even ordinate necessities).[57]

TV – “Cosby Show: Theo’s Money” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:28

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFY0HBkUm8>

This is one of the classic Cosby shows in which Theo is shown the reality of the world and that the money that you earn is very quickly taken away.

trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” In this Beatitude, Jesus promises us that those who are merciful will be treated mercifully.

VI “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”

Jesus is referencing Psalm 24 and 42, “whose heart is clean” shall have the joy of “beholding His face.” In the Old Testament this meant being with God in the temple. Christ is telling his followers and us we will see God face to face in His kingdom.[44]

Being “clean of heart” means those who carefully preserve their innocence received in Baptism. They keep their hearts and consciences free not only from all sinful words and deeds, but also from all sinful thoughts and desires, and in all their omissions and commissions think and desire only good.[45] If someone has lost this cleanness of heart, one must go to the Sacrament of Confession to purify and clean one’s heart and soul, then work to clean the mind as well.

During the Stations of the Cross we meditate on our souls, made clean by Baptism, but then disfigured by sin. Thank God, through the merits of Jesus, we can be made clean and as the Psalm says, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”[46] We know that we can achieve a clean heart through Christ’s suffering and death, which wash away our sins. “My beloved Jesus, Your face was beautiful before you began this journey; but, now, it no longer appears beautiful, and is disfigured with wounds and blood. Alas, my soul also was once beautiful when it received your grace in Baptism; but I have since disfigured it with my sins. You alone, my Redeemer, can restore it to its former beauty. Do this by the merits of your passion; and then do with me as you will.”[47]

For if one does keep their heart clean, they will see God in all His works here in this world, because their thoughts are directed always to the Highest Good, and in the other world they will see Him face to face, enjoying in his splendor which is reserved for pure souls only.[48]

Lust dissipates and divides the soul, desiring every attractive body; this is the opposite of purity of heart, which centers and unifies the soul desiring the one God alone.[49] The lustful heart forgets the goal of seeking the face of God, which satisfies eternally and instead seeks whatever will temporality satisfy.

ly happy. Christ does not say happy are those who are rich in wealth, but rather he says happy are those who are poor in spirit.

II “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

The mourners here that Jesus is speaking of are not of people who mourn and lament over the death of friends and/or family, or over the loss of temporal riches or possessions, but those who mourn that God is so often offended, so little loved and honored by men, that so many souls, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, are lost.[27] Jesus shows the perfect example of this in the eighth station of the cross by meeting the women of Jerusalem. The tears shed on the account of sin are useful, and “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”[28]

Envy resents another’s happiness (the opposite of mourning, which shares another’s unhappiness).[29] We should strive to rejoice with one another and share in happiness, and show compassion when another is suffering. It is evil to rejoice when someone fails or is in suffering. It is evil to be sad when another succeeds or experiences joy. Laughing or rejoicing in another’s misfortune is an example of not living out the beatitude, “Blessed are they that mourn.”

The promise associated with this Beatitude is that those who mourn will be comforted. If we are in mourning now over the evil in the world, we know that this is not a permanent state and that Christ “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.”

III “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.”

In this Beatitude, Jesus is referencing Psalm 37, “...the meek shall possess the land.” The “land” in the psalm is referring to the land of Palestine, however, Jesus means the Kingdom.[30] Being meek is repressing every rising impulse of anger, impatience, desire of revenge, and willingly accepts what God places upon us, or men inflict upon us.[31]

The other benefits of being meek are by controlling one’s self, we become “mightier than if he besieged and conquered strongly fortified cities.[32] By being meek, we follow the steps of Mary who was the meekest of all. By being meek, Satan has an extremely difficult time at getting after us. Meekness is one of the principal virtues of Our Lord. “What are the principal virtues we

are to learn of our Blessed Lord? The principal virtues we are to learn of our Blessed Lord are meekness, humility, and obedience.”[33]

Wrath [Anger] wills harm and destruction (the opposite of meekness, which refuses to harm).[34] A classic theme in movies and literature is for the good guy to refuse to harm the bad guy. Many times the bad guy tempts and even wants the good guy to kill them just to prove that the good guy is just as bad as them inside.

MOVIE – The Dark Knight – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 2:48

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eroRVQJLj>

This is the ending of the movie with the Joker vs. Batman. The Joker gives his final speech of how neither can kill each other out of different reasons. As mentioned above, Batman’s is the refusal to fall into wrath and always do the good.

IV “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.”

Those that seek out justice or righteousness (depending on translation) refer to those who are looking for the fulfillment of the promises of God. Jesus was the fullness of truth, the fulfillment of the old law. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies.[35]

For us, we hunger and thirst for the fullness of truth, the perfection of God. When one seeks such perfection with great desire, one will be filled, that is, will be adorned by God with the most beautiful virtues, and greatly rewarded in heaven.[36] When we come to Mass devoutly every Sunday and fully participate in the Mass, then we satisfy this desire for justice and righteousness with the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ.

Sloth refuses to exert the will toward the good, even when it is present (the opposite of hunger and thirst for righteousness, which is the passionate desire for good even when it is absent). [37] **Are we willing to search out good? Where good is lacking are we ready and willing to restore what is good?**

The Beatitudes: Part 2 – Lesson and Discussion

As we continue, realize the words our blessed Lord is telling us here were not meant just for the disciples, a specific class, race, or gender, a type of society, or religious sector, but for the entire

human race. “Our Lord Jesus Christ preached the good news to all without distinction. One cooking pot and only one kind of food: ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. ’[38] He calls each and every one to holiness. He asks each and every one - young and old, single and married, healthy and sick, learned and unlearned, no matter where they work or where they are - to love him.”[39]

Since Christ is calling us we must take up that call and follow him. We must do whatever it takes. We cannot make excuses, “we cannot say to Our Lord: ‘Wait until I have solved this problem!’ or ‘Give me until I have recovered from this illness!’ or ‘Hold on until I am no longer suffering calumny or persecution, then I will really begin to seek holiness!’ We would be sadly mistaken not to make best use of these difficult circumstances to unite ourselves more closely to God.”[40]

V “Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall be theirs”

Mercy is the compassion and/or forgiveness shown towards someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm. God shows us great mercy when we sin against Him. Christ instructs us to do the same with our neighbor.

Quick Reflection:

Do I assist the poor according to their means? Do I practice every possible spiritual and corporal work of mercy? Do I patiently endure the faults of others? Do I strive to excuse them and willingly forgive them of their faults?[41]

The greatest rewards are awarded to one who is merciful because God will be merciful. However, a judgment without mercy shall be passed on the unmerciful.[42]

Avarice is greed, the selfish reach to grab and keep for oneself (the opposite of mercy, which is the reach to give, to share with others, even the undeserving).[43] Justice is to give to others what they are due, what they deserve. Mercy is when we give to those who do not deserve of our forgiveness. The practice of mercy is to constantly look beyond what we want or what we deserve, and to be conscious of what we can do for others, whether we feel they are deserving or not. For example, if a homeless man asks us for money, we do not have time to question him, and decide whether he is deserving of our money or not.

Let us remember the words of the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our