

2019.02.17 Homily by Fr. Gabor

Today once again we hear the Beatitudes, the famous sayings of Jesus about who are the blessed or truly happy people, and so Jesus encourages us to seek true blessings and happiness and reject all the fake ones.

In order to understand the deeper meaning of these words of Jesus we need to look at the context in which he presents the Beatitudes. So I read the previous passages and noticed that they are about Jesus' compassion for the sick; another one is about eating with sinners, the next one is about fasting and picking of wheat on the Sabbath.

Then Jesus chooses His twelve apostles and turns to them and tells them the Beatitudes. So Jesus closely connects the Beatitudes with care for people who are poor, hungry and sad. Why? Because in order to bring God's blessings to the poor, hungry and sad, you also need to experience either physically or spiritually or both what it means to be poor, hungry and sad. *That is why through the Beatitudes Jesus encourages spiritual poverty, hunger and openness to feel with those who mourn.* So Jesus warns His apostles that they should not expect that they will become rich, fulfilled and happy or popular in an earthly way, just because they are following a great teacher and miracle worker; remember they even discussed among themselves who was the greatest; but rather they are to make themselves like the poor, hungry and sad, because they will be sent to them. So they will need to know what it means to be poor, hungry or sad, and by bringing God's care and love and compassion to them they will be blessed just like the poor, hungry and sad.

We can see how this works through the life of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. She chose to seek out and gather the poor, hungry and sad and for this she made herself poor, hungry and sad in heart so that when encountering them on the streets of Calcutta she knows what they are going through not only physically, but inside, in their hearts as well. *Thus both she and those she helps experience the blessings of God.*

We are called not only to praise and worship our living Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also to put our faith into merciful actions. What the apostles and Mother Theresa did is mercy, or Misericordia in action. Misericordia means misery in the heart, in other words letting ourselves

be affected by the misery of other people and so experience misery/ pain deep down in our hearts. Because only the one who knows deep down what it means to be poor, hungry and sad can compassionately reach out with God's love to the physically poor, hungry and sad. This is the precondition for works of mercy. At the end of time when Jesus holds His final judgment He is going to consider not only how many times we prayed to Him and worshiped God, but also how willingly did we reach out to the poor, hungry and sad, see what it says in Mt 25: 31-46. Going to Mass is very important, but it becomes even more uplifting when we come here to give thanks for all God's blessings that we have witnessed when caring for someone who was poor, hungry or sad.

**Our modern culture suggests that life is good only when we are rich or have plenty on our accounts, well fed, plenty to laugh about and popular among people. But having all those temporal things you lose your need for the lasting things. You also become less willing to reach out to those who are not rich, well fed, joyful or popular.**

So how can we prepare ourselves to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes? First of all we need to reach out with compassion to those of our family members who are poor, hungry or sad. That way we bring God's blessings to them. Then there is also the parish SVP who feed the hungry, the Legion of Mary who are there for those in various needs. If you want to join them they will be very happy to welcome you. Also weekly fasting helps us to know what it means to be poor or hungry. So let's continue to live in accord with the Beatitudes.