

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time A2026

I want to start this homily with an observation. One of the trends of our modern world in general, and the American society, in particular, is the pursuit of happiness. Everybody wants to be happy at all costs. To live a tranquil and peaceful life, beyond financial problems; to be in good health and successful in one's undertakings; to have all one's needs met; to have all one's desires fulfilled, ... are some of the signs by which people judge a happy life.

But, it does not take too long to discover that even when people pretend to be happy, they have disappointments, frustrations, disillusion and dissatisfactions. In the end, it comes to the truth that being successful or having everything that one needs does necessary mean being truly happy. That leads us to distinguish "Happiness" according to human criteria and "Happiness" according to God. That distinction leads us to separate simple happiness from true happiness. It is that true happiness or Everlasting Happiness of which the Beatitudes are speaking in the Gospel of this morning.

When we put our joy or happiness in God, we build on strong foundations. Nothing can destroy it, because nothing can wipe out God. The godlike joy can be found even in pain, suffering, loss, sorrow, famine, persecution, etc. That is what our Lord tells us in the beatitudes. The existence of such an everlasting happiness exceeds mere human conditions; its expectation transcends what our mind can imagine; in its fulfillment lays a surprise whose secret of realization is in God alone.

A question that comes out here is this: Is it possible to human beings to live what the beatitudes proclaim? Yes. The power of Jesus' resurrection, God's capacity to make "all things new", is transmitted to our human nature so that we are able to live what the beatitudes contain and proclaim as spiritual truth. Therefore, it is not madness to say blessed are the poor, blessed are the mourners, blessed are the meek, blessed are the hungry and the thirsty, blessed are the persecuted, etc.

God's happiness does not aim at the immediate satisfaction of human gratification and desires. It aims at the fulfillment of the deepest longings of human soul to know the truth and to possess the good, to love and to be loved. That is the reason why we have been created by God. To put ourselves on the way of achieving that true happiness is to be truly happy.

Here is another question: what advantage would there be for us to found our happiness on God? God brings to our quest a balanced judgment. Instead of being focused only the immediate human gratifications, we enlarge the horizon of our life to include the possibility of eternal happiness. When we willingly enter God's plan, we dispose ourselves to see things with eyes other than those of our human body. We receive a light of faith that brings us to see beyond our human mortal sight. We understand that life is not only about the present or the past, but also the eternal future.

Therefore, instead of hanging on to the human joys, which are limited to this world, we discover that it is not only the question of being happy right now, in the present conditions of life, but that of being happy in way that the whole of our life becomes

meaningful. When we espouse the ways of our Lord as formulated in the beatitudes, we come to true happiness that brings us the peace of heart that the world cannot give, both inwardly and outwardly.

In that true happiness, we find our true identity, the meaning of our life and the reason why we exist. As we recover who we are from God's perspective, we discover our true being, that is, what God intended us to be from eternity. At the same time, we claim our belonging to his Kingdom.

Let me conclude. The beatitudes are an invitation to way of living that leads to true happiness. They are an offer to a deep relationship with God. They proclaim a spiritual truth concerning the Kingdom of God. Those who live according to the teaching they contain belong to the Kingdom of God. They are truly happy, here and now. Those who are pure of heart, meek, merciful, peaceful ...hold out the foretaste of heaven in their hands as the life of God dwells within them. They are truly disciples of Jesus. They live not according to their criteria and ways of life, but the Lord's.

So, when our Lord pronounces: "Blessed are..." he is not formulating a vague wish, accessible at a more or less long-term future. He affirms a certainty of happiness, a permanent joy that those who believe in him have already in their hands. He inaugurates a new way of seeing life from the point of views of hope that does not disappoint. May you accept this way of life and be blessed! Amen!

Zephaniah 2:3; 3: 12-13; 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31; Matthew 5: 1-12



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