

Homily of the 4nd Sunday in Ordinary Time "A" 2017

In the Second Reading, Paul tells us, "That not many of us are wise. Not many of us are well born. We are of the lowly. We are the weak." I know that this is true in my life. It is probably true in most of our lives. If not, we should make sure it is; we should not think so much about ourselves. Rather we should think of who we are in God. Paul tells the Corinthians and us, "That those who boast, should boast in the Lord."

Our Gospel today comes from the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is said to contain the essence of Jesus' teaching. If that is so, then the Beatitudes are the essence of that essence. They contain the qualities Jesus wishes to see in his followers, qualities which completely contradict conventional values and standards.

Blessed are the poor in spirit ...

The world says: Blessed are you who are well-off. You can have whatever you want, do whatever you want. Be glad and rejoice while the money is coming in fast. Never stop and ask by what means or at whose expense. You will be envied by all.

But Jesus says: Blessed are you who put your trust in God rather than in money. Blessed are you who realize that it is not the amount of possessions you have that makes you truly rich, but the kind of person you are.

Blessed you who mourn ...

The world says: Blessed are you who live it up. Remember you only live once. So let your hair down or pull it up. Always strive to keep yourself high on something or other. Life will be great fun. So live and don't think of anyone else. You got yours, let them get theirs.

But Jesus says: Blessed are you who remember that the most valuable things in life have to be bought with sacrifice. You must know the difference between real happiness and cheap passing thrills (repeat). Even though you may sow in sorrow, you will reap the rewards of a good life with joy.

Blessed you who are meek ...

The world says: Blessed are you the tough guys. You who throw your weight about. You who are ruthless. You who get results at by means and at any expense.

Before I continue, I want to talk with you. In one of my previous homilies I mentioned a little about my past. I don't talk a lot about that, because it is not easy. I was told by a few parishioners that it was good because it helped in getting to know me and where my heart lies. We all know with my brother Levi, it's all over him. To see him is to see his heart! Growing up I was a sensitive child. You know, the type that if it is a girl is called wonderful, she's full of emotion, and it's ok. With a boy, cry baby, and it was seriously frowned on. Well, I was very sensitive. If someone nearby was crying for joy, so did I, pain, so did I. Movies, books, TV, if it was emotional, so was I. I heard the names, but it didn't bother me, my Dad on the other hand, it did to no

extreme. So one day when I was nine, he decided he'd had enough, and with his right hand and my face, he fixed it. I learned how to still feel my emotions and those of others around me, and not show one sign of it. My Mom and sisters noticed the drastic change in my personality, but they never asked and I've never told anyone, until today what happened. So if I appear cold and unfeeling, it is the farthest thing from the truth. But as:

Jesus says: Blessed you who are gentle and kind. You who refuse to get anything by trampling on others. You who feels the hurts and wants of others and want to take care of them. You are the truly great ones.

Blessed you who hunger and thirst for what is righteousness ...

The world says: Blessed are you who hunger for power, status, and fame. Never stop to ask if something is right. Ask only if it benefits you. You will always be in the limelight.

But Jesus says: Blessed are you who have standards and values, and who are prepared to live up to them. You who realize that to live well and take care of the ones who can't take care of themselves is what life is about. You will taste real happiness.

Blessed you who are merciful ...

The world says: Blessed are you who always insist on beating your opponent. You who show no mercy or forgiveness to those who make mistakes. You want to make sure that there are no people who would take advantage of you. You'll be the boss, and everybody will know it. You who live by the motto "Do unto others, before they do unto you!"

But Jesus says: Blessed are you who are able to make allowances for the mistakes, sins, and faults of others, and whose greatness lies in your ability

to forgive and forget. You who can show kindness and compassion even to those who oppose you. The rays of God's mercy will shine warmly on you.

Blessed you who are clean of heart ...

The world says: Blessed you whose fingernails are always clean; whose hands are always soft; whose teeth are always shining; and who keep up to date with the latest style of clothes and cars. You that make sure that you will always succeed.

But Jesus says: Blessed you who consider a clean mind more important than clean fingernails; a good conscience more important than clean hands; a kind and truthful tongue more important than clean teeth; and who consider it more important to be a genuine person than to wear the latest style of clothes. You who are able to find God in the world.

Blessed you who are peacemakers ...

The world says: Blessed you who are always stirring things up. You who get satisfaction out of spreading gossip about others. You who lord over others and who have no qualms about exploiting the poor and the weak. People will be forced to take notice of you, as well they should.

But Jesus says: Blessed you who work to unite people by helping to spread understanding among them. You who welcome the stranger. You who work for a more just society, thus laying the foundations of lasting peace. You will be a beacon of light in the darkness.

Blessed you who are persecuted for what is right...

The world says: Blessed you who always fit in, and who never rock the boat. Blessed you who know how to cheat and steal, lie and deceive, and who always manage to get off Scott free. You who always has the last laugh.

But Jesus says: Blessed you who stick up for what is right and true, not what is popular. You who could do wrong but who don't. If you don't get that promotion and other perks, and if people laugh at you and consider you a fool as a result, don't let that worry you. I promise you, you'll have the last laugh in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thomas Merton once said 'A man who fails well is better than a man who succeeds badly.'

So what does all this mean to us today? There is a spiritual war raging in the world. To fight it we need spiritual food. Jesus provided us with the Eucharist, this Eucharist that we receive strengthens us to be more like him. So that we can go out into the world and trust in God, help others by being kind, proclaim what is right and forgive errors, never slander, but bring peace, and if you are persecuted for this, rejoice! Because you are doing everything the way Jesus' wanted!

March on followers of Christ! Live and Breathe the Beatitudes!