

## 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today's readings teach us that true happiness, or beatitude, lies in the awareness that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father and that we will be happy only when we share our blessings with our brothers and sisters in need, and when we work to uplift them, thus declaring our "*option for the poor*," as Jesus did. Contrary to the popular belief, wealth, health, power, and influence are not the sources of true happiness. The word "beatitude" means "blessedness" in a double sense: both enjoying God's favor and enjoying true or supreme happiness.

*We need to respond to the challenge of the Beatitudes in our daily life:*

Millions are starving, persecuted, homeless, and leading hopeless lives. The only way the promises of the Beatitudes can become a reality for them is through the efforts of people like us. That is why we are told that we will be judged on the basis of our acts of mercy and charity (Mt 25:31-46). St. Teresa of Calcutta, (Mother Teresa) and her Missionaries of Charity have accepted this challenge and demonstrate that we can "live the Beatitudes" in the modern world. So, let us remember that each time we reach out to help the needy, the sick, and the oppressed; we share with them a foretaste of the promises of the Beatitudes here and now. Just as the apostles were called to minister to society's untouchables, all Christians are called to minister to the untouchables, the discriminated against, and the marginalized in our own modern society.

*Let us light a candle instead of blaming the political set-up:* Suppose we put the entire human family into a microcosm of one hundred people. Eighty of them live in sub-standard housing, fifty are malnourished, and seventy are unable to read, while only one of them has a college education or owns a computer. Six of those one hundred people possess 59% of the world's wealth. This may help us to get a

picture of the poverty in our world. God, however, doesn't need such a microcosm. He sees the whole human family. He knows that 50% of His children are hungry, 80% live in substandard housing and 70% have no education. If over half our children were hungry, cold and uneducated, how would we respond to their suffering? God wants us to live as brothers and sisters who care for one another. This is why; down through the centuries, individuals, congregations and Church bodies have practiced charity in creative, faithful ways. They have operated soup kitchens, food banks, clothing centers, homeless shelters, and housing programs. Individuals have taken care of their neighbors, helping them out with food, clothing, and shelter when there was need.

*We must take care to choose our way wisely:* “*There are two Ways, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the two Ways.*” These are the opening lines of the “*Didache*” a first century Christian catechism used to teach new Christians the essence of the Christian Faith. The way of life is the way of Jesus, the way of the Beatitudes, the way of loving service to God and our brothers and sisters that leads to eternal life. The other way is the way of death. It is the way of self-centeredness, self-reliance, immorality, self-indulgence, and immediate gratification. It leads to death and hell. Which *way* are we going? The challenge of the beatitudes is: “Are we going to be happy in the world’s way or in Christ’s way?”

Let us always remember, the Beatitudes teach us how we should live, and what we should do. What makes one blessed is not simply poverty or hunger or sadness or suffering for the Faith, but living these in the context of our commitment to Jesus and in His spirit of sharing.