

Scripture Study

Solemnity of All Saints- Cycle ABC



Opening prayer

Revelation 7:2-4,9-14

(Psalm 24:1-6)

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12a

Overview of the Gospel:

- All Saints Day was instituted to honor all the saints, known and unknown, and, according to Pope Urban IV, “to supply any deficiencies in the faithful’s celebration of saints’ feasts during the year.” Although local roots of this Solemnity go back as far as 397 A.D., Pope Gregory IV (827-844) extended the celebration on 1 November to the entire Church. The vigil seems to have been held as early as the feast itself. For Catholics, the Solemnity of All Saints is a holy day of obligation.
- This Sunday’s Gospel is from the Sermon on the Mount [Sermon on the Plain in the parallel gospel of Luke (6:20-23)] and is known as the Beatitudes. A “beatitude” is defined as “a declaration of blessedness on the ground of some virtue or good fortune.” In the Old Testament, it is conceived as a communication of life (grace) from God (see Psalm 1:1, 33:12; Proverbs 20:7).
- The Beatitudes have been called Jesus’ “blueprint” of the Church and give us an idea of how his kingdom is supposed to “work.” According to *The Catechism of Pope St. Pius X*, “the various rewards promised by Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes all denote, under different names, the eternal glory of Paradise... The Beatitudes not only procure us the glory of Paradise, but are also the means of leading a happy life, as far as this is possible here on earth... Those who follow the path of the Beatitudes do receive a reward even in this life, inasmuch as they enjoy interior peace and contentment, which is the beginning, even though an imperfect one, of the happiness of heaven.”

Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus’ teaching on the Beatitudes was chosen for this feast day?
- What does each Beatitude mean to you? What gospel value is it calling you to live?
- How hard or easy is it for you to live this gospel value? How would living some, if not all of the beatitudes get you into trouble?
- How would living each of the Beatitudes become a blessing in your life?
- What beatitude challenges you the most and perhaps even repulses you a bit?
- Which beatitude makes you feel most uncomfortable? Which one is most puzzling? Which one do you feel called to develop more in your life? Why? *Overall*, what are the Beatitudes calling you to live in your life? How can living the Beatitudes allow you to live more in imitation of Jesus and his holy ones, the Saints?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 1716-1729, 1024-1029

Closing prayer

“Convert those who do not believe with the example of your life, so that your faith has a motive. If God’s Word pleases you, act accordingly--not only God’s Word in your heart, but in your life so that you will form God’s family, united and pleasing in His eyes in all your actions. Don’t doubt, brethren, that if your lives are worthy of God, unbelievers will find faith.” --St. Augustine

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven"

Scripture: *Matthew 5:1-12a*

1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven

Meditation: What is the good life which God intends for us? And how is it related with the ultimate end or purpose of life? Is it not our desire and longing for true *happiness*, which is none other than the complete good, the sum of all goods, leaving nothing more to be desired? Jesus addresses this question in his sermon on the mount. The heart of Jesus' message is that we can live a very happy life. The call to holiness, to be saints who joyfully pursue God's will for their lives, can be found in these eight beatitudes. Jesus' beatitudes sum up our calling or vocation - to live a life of the beatitudes. The word *beatitude* literally means "happiness" or "blessedness".



God gives us everything that leads to true happiness

What is the significance of Jesus' beatitudes, and why are they so central to his teaching? The beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness that God has placed in every heart. They teach us the final end to which God calls us, namely the coming of God's kingdom (Matthew 4:17), the vision of God (Matthew 5:8; 1 John 2:1), entering into the joy of the Lord (Matthew 25:21-23) and into his rest (Hebrews 4:7-11). Jesus' beatitudes also confront us with decisive choices concerning the life we pursue here on earth and the use we make of the goods he puts at our disposal.

Jesus' tells us that God alone can satisfy the deepest need and longing of our heart. Teresa of Avila's (1515-1582) prayer book contained a bookmark on which she wrote: *Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things pass - God never changes. Patience achieves all it strives for. Whoever has God lacks nothing - God alone suffices.*

Is God enough for you? God offers us the greatest good possible -

abundant life in Jesus Christ (John 10:10) and the promise of unending joy and happiness with God forever. Do you seek the *highest good*, the total good, which is above all else?

The beatitudes are a sign of contradiction to the world's way of happiness

The beatitudes which Jesus offers us are a sign of contradiction to the world's understanding of happiness and joy. How can one possibly find happiness in poverty, hunger, mourning, and persecution? Poverty of spirit finds ample room and joy in possessing God as the greatest treasure possible. Hunger of the spirit seeks nourishment and strength in God's word and Spirit. Sorrow and mourning over wasted life and sin leads to joyful freedom from the burden of guilt and spiritual oppression.

God reveals to the humble of heart the true source of abundant life and happiness. Jesus promises his disciples that the joys of heaven will more than compensate for the troubles and hardships they can expect in this world. Thomas Aquinas said: *"No one can live without joy. That is why a person deprived of spiritual joy goes after carnal pleasures."* Do you know the happiness of hungering and thirsting for God alone?

"Lord Jesus, increase my hunger for you and show me the way that leads to everlasting peace and happiness. May I desire you above all else and find perfect joy in doing your will."

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