

«Behold, I make all things new »

(Revelation 21 :5)

Lent Retreat 2022

I AM HAPPY

Mathew 5: 1-12

The image of the Beatitude puts us in a genuine confrontation between what the world is and what the Lord is. It is as though the meeting between the two is impossible or rather forbidden. So, if you want to be happy, you have to apply what Jesus said in His sermon on the mountains. The sermon includes five beatitudes announcing the true happiness by acting righteously. It also includes three practical applications that can also bring true happiness.

We may think that the Beatitudes resemble a battle to win eternal life and that they are the opposite of this human life, as if this world looks nothing like the other world that we are waiting for. And a deep conflict between two roads that will never cross starts when the human being realizes this truth; the first road will be towards an earthly happiness and the second towards a heavenly happiness

If we want to summarize the Beatitudes, we can note that they focus on internal peace. The poor in spirit, the sorrowful, the hungry, the thirsty for righteousness, the merciful and the pure at heart – all – don't know harm and violence, and they wait for the mercy of the heavens; in summary, they are peace makers. To these – the peace makers – Jesus grants blessedness because they are called the sons of God. And yet, these will be subject to persecution in this world, but they should not fear. They should rather rejoice because their compensation in Heavens shall be great.

Jesus particularly addresses the Jews with this methodology. His teachings contradict their teachings about the religious laws. Jesus focuses on the importance of speech and acts, not like the Pharisee who speak but not act. Through work there is a call for happiness, and work is far from being a love for money, arrogance and violence. With all that, He refers to the Pharisee who are so far from true happiness whose main characteristic is humbleness.

The sermon at the mountains is a call for all of us to become righteous and have a humble heart which includes the brain, the will and the feeling. As if I am repeating with the Psalm's writer "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." So, saying no to speech without acts, no to the neglect of the duty of love, no to the submission to evil and a thousand other similar no – all – reflect a spiritual harmony in my personality and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to my thoughts.

Consider the softness of the word "blessed" that Jesus used. Some other translations say "good". Both these words hold within them the calmness and serenity that come from above not from the human being. This word accompanies the ambiance of our spiritual retreat, and the silence that comes from within and the quietness of the outside world. We reside in the blessing which means in happiness even if it was partial. This happiness/blessing is completed day after day until we reach a bigger happiness. And we might not arrive to a complete happiness except after we cross over to the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, the time of the retreat is a time of happiness by itself if we follow the instructions of the retreat and if we let the Holy Spirit guide our lives. During this time, we forget so many of our mistakes because we gain so much from God's mercy. During this time, we forgive a lot to the people who have done us wrong because God has forgiven our sins.

During the retreat, we experience a special feeling: the feeling that we have abandoned the outside world for some time. We live the beatitudes for some time. When we finish the retreat, we become equipped with these peaceful and blessed thoughts for some time that could shorten or lengthen, but in any case we will be happy during this time. We treat the others like the Lord treats us; we listen to the ones who need it; we help the poor and sick. We do all this with great happiness while thanking Jesus for His love to us. Isn't that true happiness: living peacefully with all the people and not ask for anything for ourselves in this mortal world?

If the retreat finished and we are back to the world and we forgot the blessed period – a very likely thing to happen – let's return to the retreat again. It is not in vain that the church asks us to consecrate some time for the Lord, even for once a year in a spiritual retreat like this one where we could go into ourselves and see the happiness that resides inside our internal home. I shall therefore choose it as long as the road is easy and open.