

Pope Francis Exhortation: Gaudete et Exsultate

Chapter 3 Three

In the Light of the Master

#63 & 64 The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card. In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives. The word "happy" or "blessed" thus becomes a synonym for "holy". It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self-giving, gain true happiness.

#65 We can only practice The Beatitudes if the Holy Spirit fills us with his power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency and our pride.

#67 & 68 "*Blessed are the poor in spirit*". The Gospel invites us to peer into the depths of our heart, to see where we find our security in life. Wealth ensures nothing.

#71, 72 & 74 "*Blessed are the meek*" These are strong words in a world that from the beginning has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides, where we constantly pigeonhole others on the basis of their ideas, their customs and even their way of speaking or dressing. If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. Meekness is yet another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone.

#75 & 76 "*Blessed are those who mourn*". The world tells us exactly the opposite: entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life. A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus.

#77 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*". Hunger and thirst are intense experiences, since they involve basic needs and our instinct for survival. There are those who desire justice and yearn for righteousness with similar intensity.

#80 "*Blessed are the merciful*". Mercy has two aspects. It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding. Matthew sums it up in one golden rule: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (7:12). The Catechism reminds us that this law is to be applied "in every case", especially when we are "confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult".

#83 "*Blessed are the pure in heart*". The Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. "Man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart."

#87 & 88 "*Blessed are the peacemakers*". And if there are times in our community when we question what ought to be done, "let us pursue what makes for peace", for unity is preferable to conflict.

#90 & 91 "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*". In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stand in our way. In such a society, politics, mass communications and economic, cultural and even religious institutions become so entangled as to become an obstacle to authentic human and social development.