

## *Lecture 8: The Beatitudes, #2*

1. Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall Obtain Mercy
  - a. The difference between Justice and Mercy
    - i. Justice gives to others what is due them; Mercy gives to others more than what is due them
      1. Christ called us to stop worrying about what is fair
      2. Matt 5:38-48: Be perfect as your Father is perfect
        - a. Luke 6:27-36, Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful
    - ii. In justice, we give to others what is rightfully theirs; in mercy we give to others what is rightfully ours
      1. Mercy is the love that goes past strict justice and gives a generous gift of self
  - b. Mercy demands the sacrifice of self-love
    - i. Stop worrying about our wounded self-love
      1. Christ is calling us to give an unconditional, generous gift of self
        - a. Happiness is found in giving yourself away
        - b. This is the Law of Gift
      2. Even if someone else sins against us, mercy is a love stronger than betrayal, and a grace stronger than sin
        - a. Mercy does not allow itself to be conquered by evil- Mercy conquers evil with good
  - c. What could motivate me to give in this way? Answer: We experience God's mercy, then we must go and do likewise
    - i. Remember, God alone satisfies the abyss of the human heart
      1. If you want to be filled with God, give like God
      2. Luke 6:38: Give, and it will be given to you...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back
      3. Eucharistic Prayer 1: Though we are sinners, we trust in your mercy and love. Do not consider what we truly deserve but grant us your forgiveness
      4. Mt. 18: 23-35: Parable of the Merciless Servant
        - a. God grants us mercy, but then we have the responsibility to grant mercy to others
  - d. How are we called to put mercy into action?
    - i. Principles of Solidarity and Subsidiarity – teach us that we cannot expect the government to care for all needs so that I may rest in my selfishness. We are our brothers' keepers
      1. Solidarity: we must see ourselves as united to all people, which includes the poor
        - a. What we have in excess rightfully belongs to the poor
        - b. Mother Teresa: "Give till it hurts"

- c. Mt. 25:31-46, CCC1033: “Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren.”
      - 2. Subsidiarity: we must care for others on the most local level
    - ii. Works of Mercy are the charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities
      - 1. Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead
        - a. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to brotherly love
        - b. It is a work of justice pleasing to God
    - iii. Spiritual Works of Mercy: Instruct, Counsel, Admonishing (calling to task someone who has sinned), Comfort, to Pray for the living and the dead, Forgive and Bear wrongs patiently
      - 1. Important to note that Spiritual Works are more important than the Corporal Works
        - a. Man’s soul is worth more than his body, so it is doing a person greater service to minister to his spiritual ailments
2. Blessed are the Pure of Heart, for They shall see God (here we deal with the virtue of temperance)
  - a. Catechism on Temperance: #1809
    - i. Moderates the attraction of pleasures
    - ii. Provides balance in the use of created goods
    - iii. Ensures the mastery of the will over instincts
    - iv. Keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable
  - b. So Temperance is self-control, and refusing to give into desires you know to be wrong
    - i. The power of controlling one’s passions and desires for pleasure is found in the virtue of Temperance
      - 1. We do not understand temperance, because the culture believes that it is always natural to follow your desires, and unnatural not to follow them
      - 2. It is self-mastery that makes us human, not simply animals driven by instincts
    - ii. To be temperate or pure of heart is
      - 1. To be a man or woman of great passion, but not a slave to one’s passions
      - 2. Rather, to harness the passions
        - a. To put them at the service of love and the pursuit of happiness
  - c. God gave us Passions to incline us toward the things that bring happiness
    - i. However, after the fall, we suffer from concupiscence

1. Our passions and desires lead to sin
  - a. They sometimes lean away from Truth and Goodness
2. The passions are not completely and easily subject to reason and the will
  - a. They need to be harnessed, bridled, and controlled
  - b. When they are out of control, the passions control me
    - i. I become a *slave* to my passions
    - ii. So I am not free to love
3. We must govern the passions according to truth and goodness
  - a. We are inclined to sin, but this does not mean we cannot control ourselves
    - i. Our freedom is not destroyed: we *can* be free to love
  - b. What do I need in order to gain control of my passions?
    - i. Learn what is true: must study
    - ii. Much grace: gained through prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments
    - iii. Effort and practice, acquire virtue
      1. not by grace alone do we become holy-have to cooperate
  - c. If we do succeed at controlling our passions, so that we can be free from their domination, we will have peace: Temperance, therefore, leads to Peace
3. Blessed are the Peacemakers, for They Shall be Called Sons of God
  - a. What does it mean to be at peace?
    - i. To be in harmony within oneself, with the world, and most importantly, with God
      1. The foundation of this harmony must always be the harmony with God
        - a. Union with God will grant the peace to be able to deal with all the troubles in your personal life
  - b. Now, the Peacemakers are the sons of God
    - i. In Romans 8:12-17 we see another description of the children of God: “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”
      1. So we see a link between Peace and Docility to the Holy Spirit: a willingness to follow the guidance of God
      2. Peace comes from loving and obeying God
4. Blessed are those who are Persecuted for Righteousness Sake
  - a. Why is persecution blessed? Why is it blessed to suffer?
    - i. Christ did not come to take away suffering, He transformed it and made it blessed

- b. Suffering is blessed for two reasons: it makes us better, and it has value for others
  - i. It makes us better: Suffering purifies love and forges one into a reflection of Love Himself
    - 1. Sacrifice and suffering purify our love of self-interest
    - 2. Suffering nourishes love
      - a. In the midst of suffering the only possible motivation is love, love for Jesus and love for souls
        - i. Because the suffering has taken away all self-centered motivation
  - ii. Suffering has redemptive value for others
    - 1. We are called to share in Christ's Redemptive Work
      - a. Phil 1:29, 3:8ff; Col 1:24
      - b. Jesus delivered the world from the bondage of sin only by His passion and death
        - i. We imagine that we can have a part in Christ's work of Redemption without sharing in His redeeming suffering and death, apart from His Redemptive suffering. We want Christ without the cross
          - 1. The cross of our own choosing we can carry joyfully enough; we may resign ourselves to the cross imposed upon us by sickness or poverty
          - 2. But the cross prepared for us by the ignorance, the stupidity, or the malice of others threatens to make us revolt – yet this cross has the greatest redemptive power
    - 2. Remember this: suffering has no redemptive value by itself; it takes on value and purpose only when united with Christ's sufferings
      - a. Our sufferings can be united to Jesus so that they become one with His Redeeming Cross for the salvation of souls
      - b. In the midst of suffering, hear Jesus invite you to participate in His redeeming mission
        - i. Then you will see in your suffering the souls it will enable you to save

Recommended Reading:

*The Pursuit of Happiness God's Way*, Fr. Servais Pinckaers, Chapters 6-10