

One

Today we meditate on the Fourth Beatitude: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Righteousness may have a negative connotation if you think of someone who is self-righteous. But according to Jesus, “Righteous” means those who do what is right, it means to be just, to do the will of God.

Therefore, when Jesus says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” he might just as well have said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst to do the will of God.”

Two

At the Last Supper, Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison and to die for you.”

That was no arrogant boast, it was the right desire of a man who loved Jesus. Yes, Peter was weak, and he fell many times but it was his good desire coupled with the Mercy of Jesus that carried him to the finish line. Jesus will provide the mercy, and that is why this beatitude, to hunger and thirst, must go with the next one – those full of mercy. But our job is to foster the right desire, the right hunger and thirst within us.

St. Thomas Aquinas was asked what it took to become a saint. He said, “To will it.” To desire it.

Well, I have to admit I have a lot of competing desires. I want God but I also want a bunch of other things. So, I guess the question is, what do I desire the most? Or another way to ask it is, what do I fear losing the

most? The thing I fear losing the most is the thing I value or desire the most. What is it?

Three

Distractions show us what we desire.

The habitual difficulty in prayer is distraction. And the Catechism hits us right between the eyes when it tells us a distraction from prayer or in prayer reveals to us what we are attached to.

Our disordered desires are like a giant vacuum sucking us toward them, drawing us in and consuming us.

So, what distracts you from spending time in daily meditation, from time in silent reading and reflection? That is what you want or desire more than God. What distracts you when you are in meditation? Whatever it is, that is what you desire more than God.

Can you admit that? And what are you going to do about it?

Four

How do we increase our desire for God?

When it comes to God, Absence does not make the heart grow fonder. Absence makes the heart go wander. Proximity builds intimacy.

So how do we increase our desire for God? Three ways: remove distractions, go to bed early, and spend time in friendship with Jesus.

Why is mental prayer so important? Well, how do we increase our desire for anything? By thinking about that thing and by experiencing it. This is the power of prayer. It is only by spending time with him, talking to

Him, listening to Him, thinking about Him and just being with him. That will increase our desire for him.

And mental prayer is the most transformative because we engage the intellect to think about God. And the more we think about anything, the more we desire it. That is the whole point of advertising and it works.

If you persevere in daily meditation, then you will desire God and his will more and you will reach the goal – Holiness and Heaven.

Just keep going. You can do it!

Five

Use your imagination.

John of the Cross, in his Living Flame of Love 3:26, says the desire for God is the preparation for union with Him.

And the Desire for God is fueled by the imagination. So, we need to feed our imagination with a steady diet of images that increase our desire for God. The Bible has some great ones.

For example, I know from experience that things of this world just leave me hungry and thirsty - but the Heart of Jesus is the fountain of living water. As Jesus said, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me!” As scripture says, “From My Heart shall flow a river of living water.”

Man, I want that Living Water – I want the Heart of Jesus.

Ps 36:8, “They shall be inebriated with the richness of thy house and you shall give them to drink from the torrent of thy pleasure.”

I desire that! But only a surprising image provokes the desires. We have to keep finding fresh and surprising, images of the goodness and benefits of God, or we need to do something to refresh the old ones.

But just remember this: if you just persevere in daily mental prayer in the Rosary or in silence, spending time with Jesus, thinking about all the benefits of his friendship – you will grow in desire and by your desire you will receive transforming union with God.