

Once a philosopher was walking along a sea-shore reflecting, and trying to find out an answer to the question - "How to achieve happiness?" Then suddenly, he noticed just little distance ahead, a poor fisherman lying on a mat and resting under a tree, outside his hut. "You shouldn't be wasting your time like that," he told the poor fisherman. "What should I do then?" asked the fisherman. "You should get into your boat instead, and be out in the sea, fishing; That way you will get more fish and selling them and you will have more money," he told him. "What should I do then?" again asked the fisherman. He told him, "If you keep doing so, one day you will have enough money to buy a bigger boat and you will be able to go into the deeper and farther part of the sea and catch bigger fishes, and selling them you will make still more money." "What should I do after then?" asked again the fisherman. The philosopher then said, "Now that you have plenty of money, you should go and buy a big mansion, marry a beautiful woman, have children and enjoy your life." "What should I do then?" the fisherman further inquired. Immediately, the philosopher said, "Oh! Then you go, lie down, relax, and be happy." At this the fisherman smiled and said to the philosopher, " And what do you think that I am doing now!" Everyone wants to be happy. God too wants all human beings to be happy. So, the question is not in happiness, but rather - how to achieve happiness.

All the Scripture Readings of today speak about how to achieve true and lasting happiness which comes from God. In the First Reading, the Prophet Zephaniah says that those who seek God with lowliness and humility, on the day of judgment they will escape the wrath of the Lord. If they serve God and obey His commands, they will find the peace and happiness they desire. In the Second Reading, St. Paul implores the Corinthians to consider their calling and shows them the true contrast between the values of Jesus and the values of the world. He reminds them that they owe everything good in their lives to God; because God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. He chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. By this Divine choice, God destroys the pride of those who consider themselves as something special. Therefore, if any one boasts, should boast in the Lord.

Today's Gospel is the famous page of the Beatitudes. Jesus proclaimed the Beatitudes on the Mount Tabor, near Capernaum. This is particularly important. Matthew, the evangelist presents Jesus as a new Moses, who proclaimed God's law to God's people on a mountain. In fact, to give the law to the people of Israel Moses climbed the Mount Sinai. And Jesus, to fulfill the old law and indicating to all, the perfection, climbed the Mount Tabor. However, Jesus is greater than Moses proclaiming a new and greater law from the source of divine revelation. The Beatitudes can be considered as the "Magna Carta" the great charter of Christianity, the identification of every Christian. Each of us should know by heart and, even more, to meditate assiduously and practice. The Beatitudes are the apocalyptic message that God would come to judge the world. It is essentially about the day of the Lord. The beatitudes above all show us how Jesus lived and how each of us should live. They show us the way to happiness.

Jesus proclaims "blessed are the poor in spirit" . Who are these poor in spirit? Poor in spirit are those who recognize their weakness, their own dependence, their own indebtedness to God for everything, those who place their hope and trust in God alone. It is not the wealth that can make us happy, but trust in the One who knows what we really need. Those who mourn" are the ones who are suffering the miserable conditions of a world without God. They suffer because the love of God is not understood. To these afflicted, Jesus promises consolation. Jesus proclaims "blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth". The meek are not those who fear but those who do not bear a grudge, those who find strength in serenity. Those "who hunger and thirst for righteousness" are those who desire holiness above all other things. The "peacemakers" are not the great diplomats, but those who have understood the only way to ensure peace. It means to be in full communion with God, the harmony of man with God and one another. Finally, Jesus proclaims happy are the "persecuted". This is the greatest blessedness. It is the blessedness of all the martyrs who, even amid the sufferings of martyrdom, have experienced the closeness with the great Victim of Calvary, Jesus Christ. In the eyes of the world, the poor, the mourners, the meek or lowly, those deprived of justice, those persecuted and abused can hardly be described as happy or blessed. In fact, they are the world's embarrassment. It is not the rich, nor the strong, nor the powerful, nor the well-fed, nor the good-life chasers, but those who place their total trust in God are the truly happy or blessed ones. The Beatitudes tell us then that we are not losers but winners because God is on our side. We are blessed even as we suffer because we believe that we will be vindicated, partly here and now, and fully when Christ resolves all things in the end-time. Let us be blessed in the eyes of the Lord. Amen.