

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 29 January 2017**"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven"****Reading 1:** Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10**Reading 2:** 1 Cor 1:26-31**Gospel** : Mt 5:1-12**Gospel Reading:** *Mt 5:1-12*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

**Meditation:**

What is the good life which God intends for us? And how is it related with the ultimate end or purpose of life? Is it not our desire and longing for true *happiness*, which is none other than the complete good, the sum of all goods, leaving nothing more to be desired? Jesus addresses this question in his sermon on the mount. The heart of Jesus' message is that we can live a very happy life. The call to holiness, to be saints who joyfully pursue God's will for their lives, can be found in these eight beatitudes. Jesus' beatitudes sum up our calling or vocation - to live a life of the beatitudes. The word *beatitude* literally means "happiness" or "blessedness".

**God gives us everything that leads to true happiness**

What is the significance of Jesus' beatitudes, and why are they so central to his teaching? The beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness that God has placed in every heart. They teach us the final end to which God calls us, namely the coming of God's kingdom, the vision of God, entering into the joy of the Lord and into his rest. Jesus' beatitudes also confront us with decisive choices concerning the life we pursue here on earth and the use we make of the goods he puts at our disposal. Jesus' tells us that God alone can satisfy the deepest need and longing of our heart. Teresa of Avila's prayer book contained a bookmark on which she wrote: "*Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things pass - God never changes. Patience achieves all it strives for. Whoever has God lacks nothing - God alone suffices.*" Is God enough for you? God offers us the greatest good possible - abundant life in Jesus Christ and the promise of unending joy and happiness with God forever. Do you seek the *highest good*, the total good, which is above all else?

**The beatitudes are a sign of contradiction to the world's way of happiness**

The beatitudes which Jesus offers us are a sign of contradiction to the world's understanding of happiness and joy. How can one possibly find happiness in poverty, hunger, mourning, and persecution? Poverty of spirit finds ample room and joy in possessing God as the greatest treasure possible. Hunger of the spirit seeks nourishment and strength in God's word and Spirit. Sorrow and mourning over wasted life and sin leads to joyful freedom from the burden of guilt and spiritual oppression. God reveals to the humble of heart the true source of abundant life and happiness. Jesus promises his disciples that the joys of heaven will more than compensate for the troubles and hardships they can expect in this world. Thomas Aquinas said: "*No one can live without joy. That is why a person deprived of spiritual joy goes after carnal pleasures.*" Do you know the happiness of hungering and thirsting for God alone?

"Lord Jesus, increase my hunger for you and show me the way that leads to everlasting peace and happiness. May I desire you above all else and find perfect joy in doing your will."

**Questions for Community Faith Sharing:**

1. What is your understanding of the beatitudes?
2. How am I living out the beatitudes?
3. Which of the eight beatitudes stands out for you and why?

*"Lord Jesus, you alone are my treasure and the joy of my heart. May there be nothing in this world that holds me back from giving you my all - you are my all, my life and joy now and forever."*

Source: [www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net), author [Don Schwager](#)