



*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.*

Matthew 5, 3-11

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED

The expression alludes to the prophet Isaiah (61:1-6) where he refers to the weeping on Jerusalem, the city of God, reduced to rubble and abandoned in extreme desolation.

Who are those who mourn, here proclaimed as “blessed”? What type of mourning do we mean here?

The reference to the text from Isaiah says that Jesus primarily is referring to those who face situations where they experience suffering and fatigue for the sake of His person and the Gospel. It is an evangelizing and missionary suffering. They are those, who from personal experience, know how hard the Kingdom of God has to strive to win people’s hearts; how daily and historical events differ from this and sometimes outright assume an attitude of refusal and aggression towards the Gospel and the disciples of Jesus.

How can we not think of the XX century, which has just passed? It was the most bloody century and the century most marked by persecution that history has ever known.

How can we not think of the XXI century which has started in a lake of blood, with Christians and religious minorities slaughtered, sent away and persecuted without mercy?

How can we not think of “God’s sorrow”, of God’s mourning” because His person becomes the target of hatred and oppression and because of the killing among His children? The “mourning” which the Beatitude speaks about is, even today, the suffering which results from grieve,

disasters, injustices: the groaning of poor people who are defenceless and helpless when entire civilizations laugh and are lost in luxury and waste.

The “weeping” is the pain, very often hidden, and at times evident, which a person experiences because of suffering, mourning, abandonment and solitude... It is the boundless geography of human suffering which this second Beatitude refers to.

This “mourning” calls for our presence, our involvement, our sharing in the suffering and our affection. Faced by the mourning on the refusal of the Gospel, on the hardness of heart, on murderous violence, on the numberless facets of human suffering, the disciple of Jesus cannot be a citizen of that city of indifference, superficiality, disrespectfulness: that Babylon where there is neither weeping nor compassion for the suffering of the poor (cfr. Apoc. 18:7). The Christian is a human presence which ensures compassion, closeness and concrete help.

We are not spared from mourning nor are we freed from pain through any kind of privilege or through anesthesia. We suffer like anyone else and with everyone else but within us we have the reasons of a consolation, of a strength and of a struggle, of a hope which is the greatest gift given us by God, and which we pass on to others when they mourn and when we mourn. This is what the last part of the Beatitude means by “for they shall be comforted”. In the semitic language, the impersonal use of the verb means “because God himself will console them”. Definitely these are not consoling empty words nor are they simply a pat on the shoulder!

God has comforted us in the person of Jesus, who experienced grief and human suffering until the end. He took our suffering, our death on Him, He suffered injustice and violent oppression, not because one more victim could make a difference in human history, but to break down the wall of desperation and dismay, to give a meaning, a value, a purpose the mourning of individuals and of peoples, of saints and sinners in order to widen hope’s horizon for everyone. This leads us to four conclusions: to go through the inevitable sorrowful and painful situations as “comforted” (definitely not as spared): “so that you may not be like the rest, who have no hope” as Saint Paul wrote to the Christian community in Thessalonica; to be persons, who have Ariadne’s thread within them, so that they will not get lost and perish in the labyrinth of pain: our Lord’s Cross; to be zealous for the Kingdom, for the Gospel, without sparing any effort and commitment to be its living witness and to share it with other persons and whole cities; to be a point of comfort, support for each other, especially for those who are most tried and alone.

Let us always keep in mind our goal, our meeting with the person of Jesus, who is our hope, our strength, our consolation for: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.” (Apoc. 21:3-5).

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MEN OF THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



Certainly, at a superficial glance, Frassati's lifestyle, that of a modern young man who was full of life, does not present anything out of the ordinary. This, however, is the originality of his virtue, which invites us to reflect upon it and impels us to imitate it. In him faith and daily events are harmoniously fused, so that adherence to the Gospel is translated into loving care for the poor and the needy in a continual crescendo until the very last days of the sickness which led to his death. His love for beauty and art, his passion for sports and mountains, his attention to society's problems did not inhibit his constant relationship with the Absolute. Entirely immersed in the mystery of God and totally dedicated to the constant service of his neighbor: thus we can sum up his earthly life!

He fulfilled his vocation as a lay Christian in many associative and political involvements in a society in ferment, a society which was indifferent and sometimes even hostile to the Church. In this spirit, Pier Giorgio succeeded in giving new impulse to various Catholic movements, which he enthusiastically joined, but especially to Catholic Action, as well as Federation of Italian Catholic University Students [FUCI], in which he found the true gymnasium of his Christian training and the right fields of his apostolate. In Catholic Action he joyfully and proudly lived his Christian vocation and strove to love Jesus and to see in him the brothers and sisters whom he met on his way or whom he actively sought in their places of suffering, marginalization and isolation, in order to help them feel the warmth of his human solidarity and the supernatural comfort of faith in Christ.

He died young, at the end of a short life, but one which was extraordinarily filled with spiritual fruits, setting out for his "true homeland and singing God's praises."

POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II'S HOMILY FROM THE BEATIFICATION MASS OF BLESSED PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI - ROME, MAY 20, 1990



I always like to link the Gospel Beatitudes with Matthew 25, where Jesus presents us with the works of mercy and tells us that we will be judged on them.

I ask you, then, to rediscover the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, assist the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead. Nor should we overlook the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, teach the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the sorrowful, forgive offences, patiently bear with troublesome people and pray to God for the living and the dead. As you can see, mercy does not just imply being a “good person” nor is it mere sentimentality. It is the measure of our authenticity as disciples of Jesus, and of our credibility as Christians in today’s world.

If you want me to be very specific, I would suggest that for the first seven months of 2016 you choose a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy to practice each month. Find inspiration in the prayer of Saint Faustina, a humble apostle of Divine Mercy in our times:

*“Help me, O Lord,
...that my eyes may be merciful, so that I will never be suspicious or judge by appearances, but always look for what is beautiful in my neighbours’ souls and be of help to them;
... that my ears may be merciful, so that I will be attentive to my neighbours’ needs, and not indifferent to their pains and complaints;
... that my tongue may be merciful, so that I will never speak badly of others, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all;
... that my hands may be merciful and full of good deeds;
... that my feet may be merciful, so that I will hasten to help my neighbour, despite my own fatigue and weariness;
... that my heart may be merciful, so that I myself will share in all the sufferings of my neighbour” (Diary, 163).*

Pope Francis for WYD Krakow 2016

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