

Blessed are the peacemakers (Mt. 5:9)

Start with silence and reciting: *Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, Come and dwell within us, Cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Gracious One. Amen.*

Then read these pages, reflect on each part, and do the Individual Reflection at the end. Hopefully this will enrich your understanding of this Beatitude and strengthen your faith. Conclude with this prayer from the Psalms as in the Typical Psalms of our Green Pew Book:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my being bless his holy name. Blessed are you, O Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the lord all my life. I will make music to my God while I live. Amen.

Word of God

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Shedding Light

Peacemakers. The promised Messiah is called "Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6) and will win peace from the nations (Zech 9:9-10). It is he who will make 'children of God' or 'sons of God'. Already in the Old Testament the children of Israel are called 'sons of God'. They became sons since the Lord had liberated them from the bondage of Egypt, from slavery, and made them free. The Lord liberated them again from exile. It is the saving activity of God that generates sons and daughters (Deuteronomy 14:1; Hosea 1:10; 2:1; Exodus 4:21-22; Jer 31:9).

In Jesus this saving activity of the Lord, the God of Israel, continues to be present. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are made children of God. Each of us receives this sonship through baptism. I cannot become a son and a daughter except by receiving this grace. *For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:26-27).* The behavior is the result of the gift!

The Hebrew understanding of peace includes more than the absence of hostility. It denotes well-being and rightly ordered personal relationships and society. The peacemakers are those who strive to bring about harmony with God and with others in society. They seek to unite those who are estranged from one another

and to be reconciled with their own enemies. Since the peacemakers share in the Father's mission of reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19), they shall be called children of God. [1] St. Paul writes to the Romans (Rom 8:14): *all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God* (cf. Gal 3:26).

The Greek translation of the Book of Proverbs says: *He who winks with his eyes deceitfully brings grief to men, but he who reproves honestly makes peace*" (LXX Prov 10:10).

[1] C. Mitch & E. Sri, *Matthew*, p.91

Pope Francis (General Audience – Catechesis on the Beatitudes, April 15, 2020):

We must look at two ideas of peace: the first is the Biblical one, in which the beautiful word shalom appears, which expresses abundance, flourishing, wellbeing. In Hebrew, when one says shalom, one is wishing a beautiful, fulfilled and prosperous life, but also in terms of truth and justice that will find fulfillment in the Messiah, the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6; Mic 5:4-5).

There is also another more widespread meaning in which the word "peace" is understood as a sort of interior serenity; I am calm, I am at peace. This is a modern, psychological and more subjective idea. We generally think that peace is stillness, harmony, inner balance. This accepted meaning of the word "peace" is incomplete and cannot be made absolute because anxiety can be an important time of growth.

The Lord himself often sows anxiety in us so that we may go towards him, to find him. In this sense, it is an important moment of growth. Meanwhile, it can happen that inner tranquility corresponds to a trained conscience and not to true spiritual redemption. The Lord often has to be "a sign of contradiction (cf. Lk 2:34-35), shaking our false securities in order to bring us to salvation. And in that moment, it seems we have no peace but it is the Lord who puts us on this path so that we may attain the peace that he himself will give to us.

At this point we have to remember that when the Lord says: "Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27), he means his peace which is different from the human kind, the one of the world. Jesus' peace is different from the worldly one.

Let us ask ourselves: how does the world give peace? If we think of armed conflicts, wars normally end in two ways: either with the defeat of one of the two sides, or with a peace

treaty. We cannot but hope and pray that this second path will always be taken. However, we have to consider that history is an infinite series of peace treaties contradicted by successive wars or by the metamorphosis of these same wars into other ways or into other places.

In our time too, war is being fought "piecemeal" in various scenarios and with different methods (cf. Homily at the Military Memorial in Redipuglia, 13 September 2014; Homily in Sarajevo, 6 June 2015; Address to the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, 21 February 2020). We have to at least suspect that within the framework of a globalization that is carried out above all for economic or financial interests, the "peace" of some corresponds to the "war" of others. And this is not Christ's peace.

Instead, how does the Lord Jesus "give" his peace? We have heard Saint Paul say that Christ's peace is "making one out of two" (cf. Eph 2:14), erasing hostility and reconciling. And the path to carry out this work of peace is his body. Indeed he reconciles all things and bestows peace with the blood of his cross as the same Apostle says elsewhere (cf. Col 1:20).

And here, I ask myself, we can all ask ourselves: who then are the "peacemakers?". The seventh Beatitude is the most active one, explicitly operative; the verbal expression is similar to the one used in the first verse of the Bible for the Creation, and it indicates initiative and industriousness. Love by its nature is creative — love is always creative — and seeks reconciliation at any cost.

Those who have learned the art of peace and exercise it are called the children of God. They know that there can be no reconciliation without giving one's own life and that peace should always be sought everywhere. Always and everywhere: Do not forget this! It should be sought this way. It is not an autonomous work that is the fruit of one's own abilities. It is the manifestation of the grace received from Christ who is our peace and who has made us Children of God.

May the true shalom and the true interior balance spring forth from Christ's peace which comes from the Cross and generates a new humanity, embodied by an infinite multitude of inventive, creative Saints who have designed ever new paths to love; Saints who build peace. This life, as children of God who for Christ's blood, seek and find their brothers and sisters, is true happiness. Blessed are those who follow this path.

Individual Reflection

-Do I live in the peace of Christ? Is my heart in peace? Do I love where I live, with whom I live, what I have and what skills/talents I have? Or am I frustrated? Why?

-Do I search for peace of heart by remaining in silence before the Lord in church or at home, talking to Him about myself/my heart? Do I read the Scripture when in silence before the Lord?

-How do I search for peace? Is it something emotional or psychological? Is it the question of my personal relationship with Jesus?

-Am I a peacemaker in my parish? The one who helps to reconcile or the one who keeps distance?

-How do I present my church? How do we present our church? In a positive way (here are the riches of our spirituality, liturgy, and offers of fellowship) or by fighting others (we are not like those, for example, the *Novus Ordo* Latins...we do not do it as they do...)?

-How do we define ourselves? In a negative way – we are not...we are against... Or in a positive way?

-How do I/we speak about the parish priest/bishop/church/Pope/Catholic Church?

-Do we know and study first the sources (www.vatican.va for what the pope says, www.vaticannews.va for what happened in the church; Scripture, and teaching of the Church –Catechism of the Catholic Church, Social Teaching of the Church, Christ Our Pascha Catechism) or do we rely on 'hearsay' and news from different 'catholic news channels' or 'catholic websites'?

-When did I study/read the official Church documents for the last time? Which ones?

-When did I check out www.vatican.va and www.vaticannews.va for the last time?