

# Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness      (Mt. 5:6)

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 those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

### *Shedding Light*

**Hungry and thirsty.** This beatitude refers to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, quoting Ps 107:5-6: "...hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress." (LXX Ps 106:5-6). Another important Scripture passage is again from Isaiah (49:10): *They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.*

Once again, in both instances, it is God himself who satisfies the needy. The *hungry* and *thirsty* is someone seeking something with his or her whole heart. The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness longs for God's saving action and seeks to do God's will "with the intensity of someone starving for food or dying of thirst." [1]

[1] G. Montague, *Companion God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 59.

*These are the ones “who are not content with things as they are and refuse to stifle the restlessness of heart that points man toward something greater.” [2]*

Jesus refers also to the banquet the Lord will prepare (Is. 25:6): *the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.* See also Is. 41:17–18; 43:20; 44:3; 49:9–10; 55:1–3. These prophetic passages are the background for *banquet parables* of Jesus (Lk 14:14-24 and parallels).

[2] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 91.

**Pope Francis (General Audience – Catechesis on the Beatitudes, March 11, 2020):**

*Hunger and thirst are primary needs. They have to do with survival. This should be underscored: this does not concern a general desire, but rather a vital, daily need such as nourishment.*

*But what does hunger and thirst for righteousness’ sake mean? We are certainly not talking about those who want vengeance. Indeed in the preceding Beatitude, we spoke about meekness. Admittedly, injustice wounds humanity. Human society urgently needs fairness, truth and social justice. Let us remember that the evil suffered by women and men throughout the world reaches the heart of God the Father. What Father would not suffer over the suffering of his children?*

*The Scriptures speak of the suffering of the poor and oppressed which God knows and shares. For having listened to the cry of oppression raised by children of Israel — as the Book of Exodus narrates (cf. Ex 3:7-10) — God descended to free his people. But the hunger and thirst for righteousness’ sake that the Lord refers to is even more profound than the legitimate need for human justice that each man and woman carries in his/her heart.*

*In the “Sermon on the Mount” which takes place a little later, Jesus speaks of righteousness that is greater than human rights or personal perfection, saying, “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:20). This is the righteousness that comes from God (cf. 1 Cor 1:30).*

*In the Scriptures, a thirst is expressed that is more profound than a physical one, a desire at the root of our being. One psalm says: "O God, thou art my God, I seek thee; my soul thirsts for thee; my flesh faints for thee, as in a dry and weary land where no water is (Ps 63[62]:1). The Fathers of the Church speak about this anxiety that lives in the heart of mankind. Saint Augustine says: "Thou madest us for Thyself, Lord, and our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee".[1] There is an interior thirst, an inner hunger, an anxiety....*

*In each heart, even in that of the most corrupt and distant people, there is a hidden yearning for the light, even if it is buried under the rubble of deceit and mistakes, but there is always the thirst for truth and good which is the thirst for God. The Holy Spirit arouses this thirst. He is the living water that has shaped our dust; he is the creative breath that gave it life.*

*This is why the Church is sent forth to proclaim to all the Word of God, imbued with the Holy Spirit. Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest righteousness that can be offered to the heart of humanity which has a vital need for it, even though it does not realize this. [2]*

*For example, when a man and woman marry, they have the intention of doing something great and beautiful, and if they keep this thirst alive, they will always find the way to move forward in the midst of difficulties with the help of Grace. Young people too have this hunger and they must not lose it! We have to protect and nourish in children's hearts, the desire for love, tenderness and welcoming that they express in their sincere and luminous outbursts.*

*Each person is called to rediscover what truly matters, what they truly need, what makes life good, and at the same time, what is secondary and what one can easily do without.*

*In this Beatitude, Jesus announces — hunger and thirst for righteousness — which is a thirst that will not be disappointed; a thirst that, if supported, will be satisfied and always have a positive outcome because it corresponds with God's own heart, with his Holy Spirit that is love, and also with the seed that the Holy Spirit sowed within our hearts. May the Lord grant us this grace: to have this thirst for righteousness which is the very desire to find him, to see God and to do good unto others.*

## Individual Reflection

- Am I thirsty and hungry for righteousness or rather, am I lukewarm?
- Do I know what righteousness is? Do I build up my understanding of righteousness by studying the Scripture and the Tradition of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Social Teaching of the Church, Christ Our Pascha catechism)?
- Am I a minimalist or maximalist when it comes to Christian living? In Parish life?
- Am I involved in my parish? How? Is it the maximum I can do?
- Do I offer my talents/skills or do I go by "minimum, do not exaggerate"?
- Do I initiate or wait 'to be asked/begged'?
- Is our parish an active member of the wider community, for example in social issues/reaching out to the needy/supporting young moms/pregnant women endangered by abortion? Where are we involved? How?
- Do we know the social teaching of the Church and do we act upon it?