

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year of Matthew (Cycle A)

Happiness is what we all are all searching for whether we realize or admit it to ourselves. However, what makes one person happy doesn't make another happy. And what is happiness anyway? Well for some a life supply of Whoppers from Burger King would make them overjoyed. For others it a toy box full on toys. For some Moms & Dads to see all her children grown and safe and successful would be their definition of happiness. For many athletes standing on the Olympic metal stand with a gold medal around their neck while listening to the national anthem pay would be sheer nirvana. But all of these examples of joyful experiences and some worthy goals, but they are only temporary moments of happiness.

I am often struck by the story of a famous Tony Award winning actress when she related how sad and alone she felt in her New York flat after receiving a standing ovation less than an hour before. So much of our lives are spent searching for that next happy moment which all fades all too quickly. Yet in today's gospel reading we find a road map to happiness.

Let us take a different look at the beatitudes from a somewhat different perspective. Looking beyond just the words themselves and search for a deeper meaning. Another word for true happiness is "blessedness" or "beatitude" Jesus, in his sermon on the mount is trying to open our blind eyes to see the vision of happiness he has for each of us.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit" if we pray to Jesus we will feel the richness of his love for us he will fill our hearts with joy to the breaking point. Where Jesus says "Blessed are those who mourn" If we open our hearts and minds we will recognize he gives us the knowledge that he is with us during our times of trial and caring our burdens while we suffer and are heal by his grace from the pain of our loss. Where Jesus says "Bless are the Meek" if we simply ask he will provide us with the wisdom and direction of which is the right path for us and we will be filled with joy of knowing will be with him eternally in heaven. Where Jesus says "Blessed are those how hunger and thirst for righteousness" all we have to do is ask for to be filled with the Holy Spirit and we will be filled with unbelievable feeling of know God's hand on us giving us happiness beyond all human understanding. Where Jesus says "Blessed are the merciful" we could say teach me your merciful heart so I can experience the joy of forgiving the hurt others have caused me. Where Jesus says "Blessed are the pure in heart" may we come to understand the joy that comes from making Jesus the focal point of our lives. And where Jesus says "Blessed are persecuted for righteousness s' sake" may we patiently accept God's love for us and take his loving hand as he reveals to us the true ecstasy that resides in believing and loving him our creator.

As we all struggle with our daily challenges let us take a moment each day to remember what really happiness comes from, loving one another as Jesus loves us. Nothing in God's love for us is temporary it is everlasting.

+John