

All Saints SML 20191  
MT 5:1-12

When Our Blessed Lord was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing various sicknesses through the whole of Galilee, the fame of His mighty works had spread into all Syria, and large crowds from all parts of Judea were flocking to the heavenly Physician. As human ignorance is slow to believe what it does not see, and slow to hope for what it does not know, those who were to be instructed in the ways of holiness needed to be aroused by bodily benefits and visible miracles so that they might have no doubt as to the authenticity of His teaching. Consequently, Our Blessed Lord used outward healings to introduce inward remedies, so that, after healing bodies, He might cure souls.

With curing souls in mind, the Lord separated Himself from the surrounding crowd, ascended a Galilean mountain, and called not only His apostles to Him, but disciples as well, anyone who would hear His word and believe in Him. And from that mystic height, He instructed them in loftier doctrines, signifying from the very nature of a mountain, that it was He who had once spoke to Moses. Back when on Mt. Sinai there

was terrifying thunderclouds and lighting. But now on the Mountain of the Beatitudes, Jesus spoke with a holy tranquility.

The Lord, who had spoken to Moses, was now speaking to His disciples, and as Jesus spoke, He revealed the secrets of the new covenant in their hearts. There were no thick clouds surrounding Him as of old, nor were the people frightened by thunder and lightning, but quietly and freely His sermon reached the ears of those who stood near, that the harsh law might give way to gentle grace.

The nature of Christ's teaching was attested to by what he said that those who wished to arrive at eternal blessedness may understand the steps to get there. "Blessed," He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It would perhaps be questionable what poor He was speaking of, if in saying "blessed are the poor" He had added nothing which would explain what sort of poor, as if poverty by itself would win the kingdom of heaven. Yet Jesus knew what you and I know. Poverty does not necessarily win hearts for the Lord. But when He says "blessed are the poor in spirit," He shows that the kingdom of heaven must be for those who are recommended by the humility of their spirits rather than by the smallness of their means.

No doubt this possession of humility might more easily be acquired by the poor than the rich: for submissiveness is the companion of the poor, while loftiness is the companion of the rich.

Yet in many of the rich is found the poor in spirit, as well, who use their abundance not to increase their pride, but on works of charity, and considers their greatest gain is to relieve the hardship of others.

Blessed, therefore, is poverty which is not possessed with the treasures in this life, but rich in the treasures in the next life.

Of this humility in spirit both Our Blessed Lord and the Apostles have given us example, who, turned from catching fish to fishing for men, and many imitated their faith. The members of the early Church:

- ✓ put away their things and possessions,
- ✓ enriched themselves with eternal goods,
- ✓ through the most devoted poverty,
- ✓ and in accord with the Apostles' preaching,

rejoiced to have nothing of the world and possessed all things with Christ.

Hence the blessed Apostle Peter, when he was going up into the temple, and was asked for alms by the lame man, said, “Silver and gold is not mine, but what I have that I give you: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk.” What is more beautiful than this humility? What is richer than this poverty?

Peter did not have stores of money, but he did have gifts of nature. The beggar born lame was made whole by Peter with a word of faith; and Peter, who in his poverty had not money to give the beggar, bestowed such a rich bounty of divine grace, that in restoring health to the feet of one man, he healed the hearts of many thousands of believers who witnessed the miracle. He had found them all lame in Jewish unbelief, but he made them leap for joy in Christ Jesus.