

Luke: 6-17, 20-26 - The Dichotomy of the Beatitudes and the “World“

Jesus came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon . And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

*“**Blessed** are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.*

***Blessed** are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.*

***Blessed** are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.*

***Blessed** are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.*

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.

For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you,

for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.” Luke: 6-17, 20-26

I know very many of you, and you know me. But, isn't it true that we don't really know someone until we know what they want, what they really care about and what's important to them?

Likewise, do we really know God if we don't know why He does things and why He doesn't do things?

If we look at the very first paragraph in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in the “Prologue,”

we get the idea of what God wants!

Pp#1. *“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in Himself, in a plan of **sheer goodness** freely created man to make him share **in His Blessed Life.**”*

God created us **to be Happy, to Felicity, to Beatitude!**

God's original idea was that we would be happy with Him **from the very beginning**, in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden. But, our first parents were seriously tempted and said, “No.”

Today's gospel is Jesus' first big homily found in Luke's Gospel. It must be important!

Jesus begins with His reason for creating us. He wants us to experience “**Beatitude,**”

He wants us to be Blessed; to know the kind of love and happiness that only He, God can give.

Yet, in Luke's gospel, we only find four Beatitudes.

In Matthew's gospel, Matthew spends three entire chapters, #s 5, 6 and 7, on the ‘Sermon on the Mount’

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus gives us nine ‘Beatitudes,’ eight of which are our stained-glass windows.

Luke, however, only spends one half of one chapter on the ‘**Sermon on the Mount,**’

and Luke lists only **four beatitudes.**

However, in his gospel, Luke also mentions **four negative behaviors,** or attitudes, which all begin with “**Woe to you**” such as, **Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation...**”

Luke expresses, or rather, Jesus, expresses a **dichotomy** between His Will, expressed in “Blessed are you,” and the **will of the ‘world,’** expressed in “**Woe to you.**”

This conflict between ‘God's Will’ and the ‘will of the world’ began with **Lucifer's rebellion,** continued with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood and has never stopped for a minute.

And, this conflict won't stop until the Resurrection of the Dead and the General Judgement.

This ever-present antagonism and hostility began to pick up serious speed about two-hundred and fifty years ago. The slippery slope of evil and disobedience has continuously grown steeper and steeper.

In my lifetime, and in your lifetime, the rebellion of the “World” against God's Will has become “**apocalyptic.**”

I remember, just forty-three years ago, celebrating the **Bicentennial** of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was July 4th, 1976. I had just moved from California to Wisconsin. We celebrated with the entire town and the next day there was a photo of my youngest daughter, Cathy (age four) on the front page of the newspaper waving an American flag and singing. At least someone in my family could sing!

Less than a month later, on August 1st through 8th, 1976, The Church held its 41st **Eucharist Congress** in Philadelphia, to coincide with the bicentennial celebration of our country. At that Eucharistic Congress a relatively unknown Cardinal from Eastern Europe spoke these prophetic words.

He said,

- ◆ *We **are now** standing in the face of the greatest historical **confrontation** humanity has **ever** experienced.*
- ◆ *I do not think that the wide circle of the American Society, or the whole wide circle of the Christian Community, realize this fully.*
- ◆ *We are now facing the **final** confrontation between the Church and the anti-church,*
- ◆ *between the gospel and the anti-gospel,*
- ◆ *between Christ and the antichrist.*
- ◆ *This confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence.*
- ◆ ***It is a test** of 2000 years of culture and Christian civilization*
- ◆ ***with all the consequences** for human dignity, individual rights, human rights and the rights of nations.*
- ◆ *It is, therefore, **in God's Plan**, and it must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously.*
- ◆
- ◆ This exhortation was given by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland.
- ◆ Two years later on Oct. 16th, 1978, Cardinal Wojtyla became **Pope John Paul II**
- ◆ Five years ago this coming April, Pope John Paul II became **Saint John Paul II**.

Today, 43 years later, it's hard to believe how prophetic St. John Paul's warning has become true.

To give an example of the steepness of the slippery slope:

Four years before Cardinal Wojtyla's statement, I was studying Criminal Law in California.

Abortion and disordered sexual acts were felonies in almost every state in the country.

But, **one of the tenants** of criminal law is ***that a law that is not enforced is in effect not a law.***

First, these laws weren't seriously enforced,

then they were intentionally ignored,

then they tolerated as not really wrong,

then they were considered normal,

then they began to be taught in schools as good

then they became individual rights

then they **were said to be "Human Rights."**

Now, if we **disagree** with them, we are against **'women's health and are homophobic**, and very

Soon, if we don't whole-heartedly embrace their ideology, we will become the criminals.

And then that law will be enforced.

How much has **Raw Evil** increased in a mere 43 years?

According to WHO, The **World Health Organization**, every year there are an estimated 40-50 million abortions in the world. This corresponds to approximately 125,000 abortions each day.

Last year's total of 'known' abortions was 41.9 million. To put that in perspective:

That's twice the number of military and civilian deaths in all of **WWI**

and that is half the number of all deaths in all of **WWII** (and **that's every year**).

The World Health Organization reported that abortion was "the **#1 cause of death worldwide**." The

number of Abortion deaths are approximately **four times more** than any other cause of death.

With these **unconscionable, horrific and evil numbers**, how can any reasonable person not realize, and admit, that the most dangerous place for human beings in this world is in a **mother's womb**.

Yet, abortion is only one battleground in this apocalyptic confrontation foretold by St. John Paul.

"We live in the best of times and the worst of times." We have incredible technology, comfort and health care, and Satan has found ways to turn all of them to evil.

But, we must also remember what Pope John Paul II said in Philadelphia about Divine Providence.

*"This confrontation lies within the plans of **Divine Providence**.*

***It is, therefore, in God's Plan, and it must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously.**"*

Remember - God is with us, He is always with each and every single human being alive on this planet

God is always trying to **draw man**, draw everyone of us to Himself.

He created us to be in union with Him forever in **Perfect Beatitude!**

Even though the world is trying to draw everyone away from God.

This war is very personal; it is fought **in** each and every one of us.

But on our side, we have God, Himself, Jesus Christ, Our Savior, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Mother, all the Angels and Saints, our Guardian Angel, the Church and the Sacraments and our own prayers for each other.

All of us believe in God; **we all have faith** or we would not be here right now.

We know God loves us - and we love Him.

But our faith should express itself in **Hope** and **Trust**. **Trust** is one of the subject of today's Readings.

But, Trust is hard!

God Trusts us too!

St. Teresa of Calcutta said: "I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish he didn't trust me so much."

A Question:

If we were suffering from a terrible extended drought with high temperatures and low humidity with a great danger of fire, and we decided to hold a Sunday afternoon Prayer Service for rain.

How many of us would bring **an umbrella?** **That would be Trust.**

Jesus gives us **the umbrellas** we need **in this gospel**.

Blessed are you who are poor, for the **kingdom of God** is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry, for **you will be satisfied**.

Blessed are you who are now weeping, for **you will laugh**.

Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce **your name as evil** on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.

That's Why I Created You!