

Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 5: 1-12.
When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Matthew 5:1-12.

Introductory Prayer:
Father of love, source of all blessings, you have led me throughout my life, and you lead me still. Thank you for your paternal care. Jesus, Son of God, you died for me on the cross to pay for my sins and manifest your unconditional love for me. Thank you for showing me the way home to the Father. Holy Spirit, sweet guest of the soul, you heal me and strengthen me and set me on fire from the most intimate depths of my soul. Thank you for your loving presence within me.

Petition:
Jesus, help me to love your beatitudes and adopt them as my standard for life.

1. A Mountain as a Cathedra:
Let's imagine ourselves that memorable day, sitting with the multitudes on a sunny mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is preaching to the crowd from below, using the steep incline as a natural amphitheater. The soft breeze coming off the water and running up the hillside seems to carry his gentle voice to all of the hundreds of anxious listeners. We are impressed that the Teacher, despite the fact that he is

authoritatively delivering a strong message, seems so happy and full of peace. He exudes an interior freedom that allows him to devote himself entirely to serving God and others. The world seems to have no hold on him. Listening to Jesus we are drawn to exclaim, "This man knows what he is talking about." He knows what heaven is like. He knows firsthand that heavenly blessedness far outstrips any worldly happiness I could imagine."

2. Going Against the Current:
It could feel like we have just heard the most powerful sermon ever delivered, and yet it will take us a while to digest it all. It was absolutely counter-cultural, even shocking. And yet, as challenging as it was, it all seemed to ring true in our hearts. Jesus boldly proposed to us in the Sermon on the Mount a fresh, new roadmap to true happiness and blessedness. All of us have a deep desire to be happy and live in peace, and we had thought before that we had it all figured out. But Jesus' ways are the very opposite of the ways of the world. He scorns all false beatitudes which make happiness depend on self-expression, license, having a good time, or an attitude of "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you shall die." He knows that the results of these false beatitudes are mental disorders, unhappiness, false hopes, fears and anxieties.

3. Contrasting Solutions:
As the keys to success and happiness, the world often proposes to us one or more of the seven deadly sins. We hear the catchwords: "security," "revenge," "laughter," "popularity," "getting even," "sex," "armed might," and "comfort." Jesus, without batting an eyelash, just turned all of these shallow ideals on their head, calling them all a dead end. He bravely challenged the spirit of the world — accepting the fact that such a move would make him very unpopular with some, and even seal his fate at Calvary. In place of the worldly pleasure route, he offered us a better way, the only way to true blessedness, as expressed in the Beatitudes, one that he himself would walk until the day he died for us. Perhaps these words ring true in my heart..., but am I prepared to cut the strings that keep me running after the false beatitudes?

Conversation with Christ:
Dear Lord Jesus, you dwell in heaven with all your blessed ones. You have called me to be holy. You have called me to be a saint, blessed and happy. Enlighten my mind today to know where true happiness lies. Grant that I may desire only this true happiness and reject all deceiving imitations that the world throws my way.

Resolution:
I will get myself back on track to true happiness by getting to the sacrament of confession this week.