



Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

This Sunday we listen to the Beatitudes. I believe the Beatitudes are more about Jesus than about us - and that only in Jesus we can begin to live them.

Let me start with a story. It was told by the twelfth century preacher, Bernard of Clairvaux. The sermon has this intriguing title: **The Four Daughters of God**. They are Truth, Justice, Mercy and Peace. In the sermon the Four Daughters come before God after our first parents fell, that is, after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. They held a kind of trial:

Truth spoke first. She pointed out the obvious: Adam and Eve had every advantage, but they turned their back on God. Next came Justice. She said that the man and woman did not deserve a second chance. They knew the rules and they deliberately broke them. But Mercy said, "Yes, I agree they do not merit a second chance, but, still, I plead for them." Finally Peace said that if God did not do something for Adam and Eve, there would only be enmity between heaven and earth.

God faced a dilemma. He loves all of his daughters - but how can he affirm one without losing another? Strict justice seems to exclude mercy. Keeping the peace seems to require hiding a bit of the truth. Here on earth we sometimes fudge the truth in order to keep the peace. But it cannot be that way in heaven. How does God keep his daughters together: Justice with Mercy and Peace with Truth?

God came up with a this solution: He would himself become man.

Jesus -who is God in human flesh - brings together truth and peace, justice and mercy. We see that in the Beatitudes. In reality, the Beatitudes are more about Jesus than they are about us. He is the key to understanding them. Jesus is the poor man - the one who emptied himself. He brings together righteousness (justice) and mercy. He - and he alone - makes peace between heaven and earth. Even though he had created galaxies, he walked meekly on this small planet. And he put up with insults and false accusations from beings he himself had made. He did all this for only one reason - to bring us salvation.

As we read today's Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples:

- Blessed are the poor
- Blessed are those who mourn
- Blessed are the merciful
- Blessed are you when they insult you

The Beatitudes are demanding, but the alternative is worse - despair. Only in Jesus can we live the Beatitudes.

Jesus came to keep justice and mercy, truth and peace together. He came to save us. And today he teaches us the Beatitudes: they show us who Jesus is and how - in Him - we can have justice with mercy, truth that leads to peace."

Have a Blessed Week!

Rev. Rafal Ligenza,

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