



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO CHILE AND PERU

(15-22 JANUARY 2018)

MASS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

O'Higgins Park (Santiago)

Tuesday, 16 January 2018

[Multimedia]

“When Jesus saw the crowds...” (*Mt 5:1*). In these first words of today’s Gospel which we have just heard, we discover how Jesus wants to encounter us, the way that God always surprises his people (cf. *Ex 3:7*). The first thing Jesus does is to look out and see the faces of his people. Those faces awaken God’s visceral love. Jesus’ heart was not moved by ideas or concepts, but by faces, persons. By life calling out for the Life that the Father wants to give us.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he saw the faces of his followers, and what is most remarkable is that they, for their part, encounter in the gaze of Jesus the echo of their longings and aspirations. This encounter gives rise to the catalogue of the Beatitudes, that horizon towards which we are called and challenged to set out. The Beatitudes are not the fruit of passivity in the face of reality, nor of a mere onlooker gathering grim statistics about current events. They are not the product of those prophets of doom who seek only to spread dismay. Nor are they born of those mirages that promise happiness with a single “click”, in the blink of an eye. Rather, the Beatitudes are born of the compassionate heart of Jesus, which encounters the hearts, compassionate and in need of compassion, of men and women seeking and yearning for a life of happiness. Men women who know what it is to suffer, who appreciate the confusion and pain of having the earth shake beneath

their feet or seeing dreams washed away when the work of a lifetime comes to nought. But men and women who also know what it is to persevere and struggle to keep going, what it is to rebuild their lives and to start again.

How much the heart of the Chilean people knows about rebuilding and starting anew! How much you know about getting up again after so many falls! That is the heart to which Jesus speaks; so that this heart may receive the Beatitudes!

The Beatitudes are not the fruit of a hypercritical attitude or the “cheap words” of those who think they know it all yet are unwilling to commit themselves to anything or anyone, and thus end up preventing any chance of generating processes of change and reconstruction in our communities and in our lives. The Beatitudes are born of a merciful heart that never loses hope. A heart that experiences hope as “a new day, a casting out of inertia, a shaking off of weariness and negativity” (Pablo Neruda, *El habitante y su esperanza*, 5).

Jesus, in proclaiming blessed the poor, the grieving, the afflicted, the patient, the merciful... comes to *cast out the inertia* which paralyzes those who no longer have faith in the transforming power of God our Father and in their brothers and sisters, especially the most vulnerable and outcast. Jesus, in proclaiming the Beatitudes, shakes us out of that *negativity*, that sense of resignation that makes us think we can have a better life if we escape from our problems, shun others, hide within our comfortable existence, dulling our senses with consumerism (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2). The sense of resignation that tends to isolate us from others, to divide and separate us, to blind us to life around us and to the suffering of others.

The Beatitudes are that *new day* for all those who look to the future, who continue to dream, who allow themselves to be touched and sent forth by the Spirit of God.

How good it is for us to think that Jesus comes from the mountain of *Cierro Renca* or *Puntilla* to say to us: blessed, blessed indeed are you, and you, and you, each one of us.... Blessed are you if, moved by the Spirit of God, you struggle and work for that *new day*, that new Chile, for yours will be the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (*Mt* 5:9).

Against the resignation that like a negative undercurrent undermines our deepest relationships and divides us, Jesus tells us: Blessed are those who work for reconciliation. Blessed are those ready to dirty their hands so that others can live in peace. Blessed are those who try not to sow division. That is how the Beatitude teaches us to be peacemakers. It asks us to try to make ever greater room for the spirit of reconciliation in our midst. Do you want to be blessed? Do you want to be happy? Blessed are those who work so that others can be happy. Do you want peace? Then work for peace.

Here I cannot fail to mention Santiago's great bishop, who in a *Te Deum* once said: "If you want peace, work for justice"... And if someone should ask us: "What is justice?" or whether justice is only a matter of "not stealing", we will tell them that there is another kind of justice: the justice that demands that every man and woman be treated as such" (Cardinal RAÚL SILVA HENRÍQUEZ, *Homily at the Ecumenical Te Deum*, 18 September 1977).

To sow peace by nearness, closeness! By coming out of our homes and looking at peoples' faces, by going out of our way to meet someone having a difficult time, someone who has not been treated as a person, as a worthy son or daughter of this land. This is the only way we must forge a future of peace, to weave a fabric that will not unravel. A peacemaker knows that it is often necessary to overcome great or subtle faults and ambitions born of the desire for power and to "gain a name for oneself", the desire to be important at the cost of others. A peacemaker knows that it is not enough simply to say: "I am not hurting anybody". As Saint Alberto Hurtado used to say: "It is very good not to do wrong, but very bad not to do good" (*Meditación radial*, April 1944).

Peacebuilding is a process that calls us together and stimulates our creativity in fostering relationships where we see our neighbour not as a stranger, unknown, but rather as a son and daughter of this land.

Let us commend ourselves to Mary Immaculate, who from *Cerro San Cristóbal* watches over and accompanies this city. May she help us to live and to desire the spirit of the Beatitudes, so that on every corner of this city we will hear, like a gentle whisper: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (*Mt 5:9*).