

# **Wisdom of the Saints: Our True Happiness**

*Sermon by Father Håkan Lindström*

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**D**uring the first eight days of November we can gain a plenary indulgence for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory – by visiting a cemetery and praying there for the souls in Purgatory. And the usual conditions, of course, apply also to these plenary indulgences that can be gained for the souls in Purgatory. There is a cemetery not very far from here, in fact. It might be an idea to go for a little walk after lunch to visit that cemetery and pray there.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

We celebrate today, my dear brethren, the great Feast of All Saints, on this which I think I might call the last day of our Pilgrimage of Reparation – reparation that was needed because of this ecumenical spectacle. Reparation for the glory of God and reparation for

souls who risk being confused and led away from the true faith by these on-goings in Lund and Malmö during this last couple of days.

As I said in my sermon on Sunday, Pope Pius XI wanted the Feast of Christ the King, which he instituted, to take place on the last Sunday of October. That is what he says in his encyclical *Quas primas*: that Sunday which immediately precedes this feast that we celebrate today, the Feast of All Saints.

And I said that there is a connection there. Those are the saints, who follow Christ the King, who allow themselves to be ruled by Christ the King and also enjoy His protection. To be ruled, protected and helped by Christ the King, that is what helps us to become saints, to get to Heaven.

This idea is expressed in the liturgy of today's feast day. I came across it, for instance, in

the so-called *invitatorium* at the beginning of Matins – the part of the Divine Office that is prayed during the night by monks or in the morning by all priests who are obliged to pray the breviary.

### **Come Let Us Praise the Lord**

The *invitatorium*, which is repeated several times between the verses of Psalm 94, the *Venite exsultemus Dominum*: “Come, let us praise the Lord”, this *invitatorium* reads: *Regem regum Dominum venite adoremus, quia ipse est corona Sanctorum omnium*. “Come and adore the Lord, the King of kings, because He is the crown of all saints.” *Ipse est corona Sanctorum omnium*. “He is the crown of all saints.” So He is, of course, also the reward of all the saints. We see how this idea – this connection with Christ the King, Who is also the reward of His faithful subjects, because the happiness in Heaven is seeing God and loving God – how this thought is being expressed in today’s liturgy, which is of course much older than the liturgy of the Feast of Christ the King, which was instituted only by Pius XI.

And in the Gospel today, we have the Sermon on the Mount – Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, where He talks about

the eight beatitudes. And this tells us that if the saints are the loyal subjects of Christ the King, they are also the ones who have understood and put into practice in their lives – not just a matter of theoretical understanding, but put into practice in their lives – this wisdom, this knowledge about what our beatitude, what our true happiness, actually consists in. And this Our Lord tells us, when he talks about these eight beatitudes.

As Saint Thomas Aquinas – that great theologian of the Middle Ages – explains, these eight beatitudes of Our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, are a kind of deeper exposition of that general rule that we have all learnt as the answer to the first question of our catechism: Why are we here on earth? We are here on earth in order to know God, to love Him, to serve Him in this life and live happily with Him ever after in Heaven.

As Saint Thomas Aquinas explains the eight beatitudes – as a deeper explanation of this – he tells us what this happiness consists in more precisely and in what it doesn’t consist. Because, he says, there are four false opinions about the happiness of man. They are not all equally false; some are more wrong than others, but they are all false.

Neither of these four opinions actually express the full truth of the matter.

### **Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit**

The first, then, is the opinion of those who think that the happiness of man consists in externals – in riches or in fame or reputation and things like that. And against this, says Saint Thomas Aquinas, Our Lord says, *Beati pauperes spiritu* (“Blessed are the poor in spirit”).

### **Blessed Are the Meek**

Others think that the happiness of man consists in the satisfaction of our own wishes. To be free, have complete freedom of our will, to get everything that we want. This takes four different expressions. One is the angry expression – those who want revenge against their enemies. Some seek revenge to such an extent that it is the only thing they look for or they think they will be happy and content if they can only get the revenge they seek against their enemies. Against this Our Lord says, *Beati mites* (“Blessed are the meek”).

### **Blessed Are They That Mourn**

Others think that happiness consists in getting all the joy and pleasure that we can dream of, that we can think of. That is,

earthly joy and pleasure; and against this Our Lord says, *Beati qui lugent* (“Blessed are they that mourn”). They are sorry for their sins, and mourn also the state of mankind, the fallen, our fallen nature, that has been resurrected by Baptism, of course. Yes, we are again God’s friends, but we are still wounded, so we have a tendency to fall back into sin unless we take heed, unless we make use of God’s grace, of His help. So there is always this risk of sin; that is also reason for our own sorrow here on earth. We call this life here on earth, of course, a dwelling in a vale of tears – the valley of tears (in the *Salve Regina*). Therefore Our Lord says, “Blessed are they that mourn”. They, who don’t think that happiness is to be found in earthly things.

### **Blessed Are They That Hunger and Thirst After Justice**

And then there is something that more concerns the will rather than the sensual passions – the pride of the will not wanting to have any authority above itself, wanting to decide everything for itself. Some think that is what happiness consists in. This is a very topical idea – is it not? People talk about how they have the right to do what they want, to promote ideas



**After our final Mass in Sweden on All Saints Day, we all accompanied Father Lindström to a local gravesite where he led us in prayers for the Holy Souls.**

that are even against the natural law, and so on. Against this Our Lord says, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice”.

Because justice is exactly giving to each and every one that which is his due, to obey God’s law, to fulfill our duty – that will to be regulated by a law that is outside and above us. To be just is to submit our will to a measure that is outside of us. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice”.

### **Blessed Are the Merciful**

And then there are those who want to dominate others. They think that happiness consists in having power, dominating others, ruling. And against that Our Lord says, *Beati misericordes* (“Blessed are the merciful”), who sometimes give up even what is their strict right perhaps, because they are merciful,

because they want to give, they forgive and they give something that they might strictly speaking have a right to require. *Beati misericordes*.

Then there are those of the third false opinion, who think that perfection and happiness here on earth consist of the virtues of the so-called active life and in practicing the active virtues. Reaching out and helping others, and doing things like this; and also in temperance and self-control, those who do great things in sports – and so on – practice tremendous self-control; these are examples of this.

Here Our Lord doesn’t say that it is completely wrong; because, as Saint Thomas explains, these virtues are a help, they are a means to reach true happiness. They are not true happiness

itself, but they are a means to reach happiness.

### **Blessed Are the Clean of Heart**

So, for instance, temperance controls one's self; to have temperance, that is most completely expressed in the purity of the heart. That's why Our Lord says, "Blessed are the clean of heart"; but He reminds us that being clean of heart here on earth is not what happiness consists in, but it is something that could lead to happiness as a means towards the end. That is why He says: *Videbunt* (in the future tense), they shall see God. Seeing God will only happen later.

### **Blessed Are the Peacemakers**

And also in terms of justice, being good to others, doing good to others, Our Lord says, "Blessed are the peacemakers". It is such a good thing to exercise justice towards others that those who do this shall be called the children of God, *fili Dei vocabuntur* – but it is nothing that will happen already here on earth; it is a means towards the end of reaching complete happiness in Heaven in the life hereafter.

And in those two sentences, because they shall see God, and because they shall be called the

children of God, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, Our Lord also expresses the very essence of the happiness of Heaven. Because that happiness is to see God as He is, and to love God above all things without the risk of ever losing that love of God. To love Him completely and in a stable manner. A manner such that it can never be lost; something that we always have to risk as long as we live here on earth.

The first is, of course, expressed when the Our Lord says: "Blessed are the clean of heart because they shall see God". Seeing God – that's one part of happiness in Heaven. But it is kind of fulfilled in loving God, and according to St. John in his first epistle, being the child of God or being the sons of God is a way of expressing this love of God because there he writes: "Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed upon us that we shall be called and be the sons of God".

So in this '*fili Dei vocabuntur*' – 'they shall be called the children of God' – St. Thomas Aquinas sees that the blessed will have this childlike love of God and that it is something that they shall have in Heaven – only in the life hereafter. This is contrary to the fourth false opinion which holds that our

complete happiness consists in the kind of knowledge and love of God that we can have already here on earth. In these two things – in seeing God, loving God above all things – happiness and the beatitude of the saints consists.

### **Blessed Are They Who Suffer Persecution For Justice' Sake**

After these seven beatitudes, Our Lord also says that “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake”. And this, of course, is encouraging for us, if we suffer some persecution and suffer some difficulties in trying to defend the honor of God, His Blessed Mother or the saints or the true Catholic Church, its true teaching.

I don’t think we can say, my dear brethren, that in the last few days we suffered an awful lot of persecution, but then again, there were some difficulties. We couldn’t use that nice medieval church that we had wanted to use – rather to have been expected, I think. There were a few people who were, I think, heckling us a little bit during our procession; but thanks be to God the police actually helped us there. We were fearing that the police would try to stop us but they didn’t – they helped us. In fact, I don’t think we can

complain about an awful lot of persecution. There was a little bit – and I think there is some persecution in the sense that St. John also writes in the same passage from his first epistle: “That the world knows not us, because it knows not Him”; it doesn’t know Our Lord.

If we haven’t exactly been persecuted, I think we have been met, not exclusively but at least with a large share of incomprehension, people who don’t understand. But we try our best, we try to show the truth. I’m sure hearts are touched even if they don’t fully understand and to the extent that people perhaps mock us, try to stop us, make life difficult for us, we have suffered a little bit of persecution and we are consoled by the words of Our Lord, that blessed are also they who suffer persecution for His sake.

So, my dear brethren, let us pray then during this last Mass of our Pilgrimage of Reparation on this great Feast day of All Saints. Let us pray that we – with our different prayers and activities – have helped to fulfill the purpose of this pilgrimage. Let us present it to God, so that it be pleasing to Him, that we may have done something to repair the injustice that is done to His honor, by the things that we have done and the

prayers that we have offered up to God Himself, to His Blessed Mother, and to all the Saints.

The saints that were thrown out of the churches by Luther, by the protestants, as is so movingly expressed in a painting that at least, I think, the Swedes here might have seen in Dr. Perssons' edition of the two papal bulls against Luther; a reproduction of a painting in there by the Swedish artist Gisela Trapp; it is a painting called "Luther and the Saints", where Luther is standing there with his reformers, driving out the saints from the church. So hopefully we have done some reparation to repair also the glory of the saints, to which also some harm has been caused by what's been going on.

And also, of course, we hope, let us pray to God, that we have also helped our neighbor, that we fulfilled this beatitude of doing justice to our neighbor, to be peacemakers – that is because '*opus iustitiae pax*', as a famous quote from Holy Scripture, reads: "the work of justice is peace".

By doing justice to one another we can reach true peace. I hope we have managed to do justice to those souls that we have encountered during these days, that we have done justice

to our duty. Because it is our duty, we who have received by God's grace the true Catholic Faith, who have received His help to also keep it in the adverse circumstances in which we live today. It is also our duty to try and pass it on to others, all according to our different states, whether we are priests or laymen. I hope we have fulfilled this duty of doing justice to our neighbor as well as we could during these few days, that is certainly what we have tried to do.

### **We Ask for God's Blessing**

We ask for God's blessing that we may have repaired the glory of God, repaired the honor and glory of the saints. That we may have helped our neighbor to keep the Catholic Faith, keep taking it seriously or even to come closer to that true Catholic Faith and the true Catholic Church, which has the means that with certainty, if someone is faithful to them and keeps applying them to him or herself throughout their lives, will lead to the glory of Heaven, that will help the soul to become one of all the saints that we celebrate today.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. 



**Our Lady of Fatima in procession through the streets of Lund. Latin hymns and the Holy Rosary were led by Father Lindström. Placards in defense of the Faith were held high. See how the police on horseback protected us for the entire hour-long procession.**