

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

**Readings:** Revelations 7:2-4, 9-14  
Psalm 24:1-6  
1 John 3:1-3  
Matthew 5:1-12

Solemnity of All Saints  
November 1, 2009

**Word:** **The Kingdom of heaven is for those who have the righteousness of Christ.**

**Theme:** **We have the righteousness of Christ when we endure persecution for his sake.** [Perseverance]

**Promise:** ***“He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his savior.”*** (Ps 24:5)

### Reflection:

We all want to be happy, and we go through life searching for happiness. The world itself offers many ways to be happy, but more often than not, these are illusory and cause us sorrow.

Jesus, on the other hand, offers us a different paradigm which, if followed and obeyed, is the way to true and ultimate happiness. In his Sermon on the Mount, or the Beatitudes, He lists different sets of values and characteristics necessary for us to attain freedom from the issues and challenges we face daily. Christ's criteria for happiness are radically different from that of the world's. It is not about wealth or power, or about being famous and idolized. It is about being poor in spirit, about humility, righteousness, mercy, being makers of peace, and persistence and endurance for the faith, even in the face of persecution, in order to find Christ and fulfillment as human beings.

We often hear the expression “a blessing in disguise.” This happens when at first, we find ourselves in what appears to be an unfortunate, unfavorable or even disastrous situation. An example could be the two recent calamities (Ondoy and Pepeng) which ravaged the country. And yet, looking back, we discover those dark clouds and pouring rain a silver lining, after all – did not all of us really pray hard for one another and for our country? Did it not draw out the best among those of us who rushed to aid of victims, many even giving their lives to save others? Did not most of us contribute and share whatever we had (time, talent and treasure) to help uplift our afflicted brethren? The natural disasters that came upon so many of us, including members of the community, paved the way for a powerful exercise of faith in terms of sharing and showing our love and concern for one another, for after all, we are we not of one blood, Filipinos, and children of The One True God? The misfortune opened our eyes to our failed stewardship of our environment, and to finally assume responsibility and accountability for our use and exploitation our land and natural resources, God's gift to us,

Jesus in today's gospel reading is telling us that poverty is really a blessing in disguise. Surely, He is not speaking of destitution or the complete lack of basic necessities in life. Neither is He praising hunger, illiteracy, or the materially poor. He is not even saying that living below the poverty line is not so bad after all. In fact, we read in the gospels how Jesus strives to uplift the poor. Miraculous healings, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, raising the dead are just a few examples. He invites us to follow his footsteps in alleviating the lot of the poor and the destitute, admonishing us to behave kindly and with consideration towards the less fortunate.

And to the poor and the destitute, Jesus says- "do not be afraid" but rejoice. He means for his church – us - to reach out and share with, and care for His poor, assuring them that their time of peace and comfort is at hand because we, the faithful, will be there to help fulfill Christ's mission.

Furthermore, Jesus also assures those of us who toil and work for an honest living, that this is far more pleasing in the eyes of God than wealth obtained through corrupt means. To the worldly, this teaching of Jesus is sheer madness because their motivation is to enrich themselves at whatever cost, live an indulgent life, and perhaps squander what they have on things that satisfy the flesh. But the flesh is insatiable. Soon they find themselves in a vacuum, an emptiness that wealth does not fill, or satisfy. Ask any rich person, who obtained his wealth the fast and easy way if he is truly happy. A vast majority will admit that money does not buy happiness. For true happiness is a state of the heart. It can neither be quantified nor qualified because it is only the love of Jesus, and the peace that comes with it, that can truly make us happy. And when it fills our hearts, as we abide in Him, it overflows with great abundance. Only then can we be truly satisfied.

Poverty therefore gives more opportunities to trust in divine providence, leading to a greater intimacy with God. Experience tells us that when we are in need, whether materially, physically or even emotionally, our handicap leads us to seek God. When pushed beyond our human limitations, what do we do? We are humbled, we bow down on our knees and pray to our God, even pleading for the help of all the Saints, Mama Mary, and all the angels. Poverty of spirit is surely a blessing in disguise, because it gives room for Jesus to fill our lives and provide what we need. Material poverty may leave us a bit insecure, but it allows us to be responsible and vigilant about our livelihood. It also favors a healthy simplicity of relationships with our friends and neighbors. Being poor opens up doors and promotes greater harmony and closer relationship within the family as they struggle to overcome financial challenges. We learn to better appreciate God's goodness in simple pleasures. A "blessing in disguise" indeed.

The Saints are classic examples of persons who lived out the beatitudes. ***They are the ones who survived the test of great distress, they have washed and made white their robes by the Blood of the Lamb.***" (Rev7:14) They have been purified as they lived their lives anchored on their hope in Jesus. ***Even while suffering they declared: "I am overjoyed in the midst of persecution"*** (2 Cor:7, 4) Because, for the Christian, suffering is not incompatible with joy, since it is lived out "for the sake" of Christ Jesus.

When all is said and done, there is really only one Beatitude; “Happy are those who are Christ-like,” for Christ first lived the Beatitudes in His daily life. And He said, **“Pick up your cross and follow me.”** As we learn to embrace our own crosses in life, and follow Jesus, we are assured of eternal bliss. The Beatitudes is the path laid for us by Jesus that we may be like the Saints in heaven, who went before us.

Our Prayer|:

Our Farther in heaven, we thank you for giving us your Son, Jesus. We thank You Jesus, for laying down Your life for us as ransom for our sins. We thank You for establishing Your righteousness in us, and the grace and the strength to live out Your teachings, especially this Beatitudes. For only by Your grace Lord, and through the power of Your Holy Spirit can we rise up from our human frailties. Continue Lord, to humble us, purify us, and strengthen us, so that guided by this Sermon on the Mount, we will live victorious in You, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:**

1. What is my purpose and my goal? Have I understood my purpose in life?
2. How has the Beatitudes affected my life in relation to my purpose in life?
3. What to me is the correlation of the Solemnity of the Saints and the teaching of Jesus on the Mount? How does it affect me?

**Next Week’s Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

November 2, 2009 (Mon): 2 Mc 12:43-46; Ps 103; Rom 8:31, 35, 37-39; Jn 14:1-6  
November 3, 2009 (Tue): Rom 12:5-16; Ps 13:1-3; Lk 14:15-24  
November 4, 2009 (Wed): Rom 13:8-10; Ps 112:1-2, 4-5, 9; Lk 14:25-33  
November 5, 2009 (Thur): Rom 14:7-12; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Lk 15:1-10  
November 6, 2009 (Fri): Rom 15:14-21; Ps 98:1-4; Lk 16:18  
November 7, 2009 (Sat): Rom 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Ps 145:2-5, 10-11; Lk 16:9-15

***“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”***