



food, that thirsts for this drink: hearing the prophetic Spirit call to it: *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet* (Ps. xxxiii. 9)...

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Mercy wishes thee to be merciful; Justice wishes thee to be just, so that the Creator may be made visible in thee His creature, that the image of God may shine resplendent in the mirror of thy human heart...

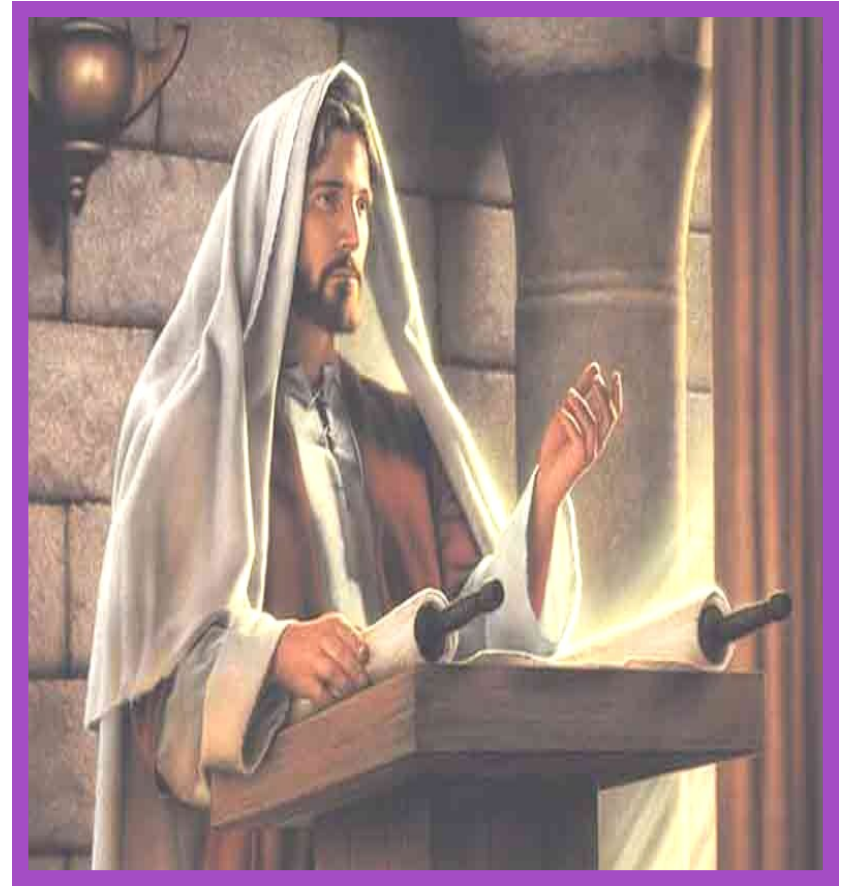
Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God. Great is His happiness for whom so great a reward is prepared... A clean heart means practicing those virtues of which we have just spoken... so that we may see God. What mind can conceive, what tongue can tell the greatness of such blessedness?...

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. This blessedness, as the Apostle says: *Let us have peace with God* (Rom. v. 1; 11 Cor. xiii. 11): and that of which the Prophet David says: *Much peace have they that love thy law: and to them there is no stumbling block* (Ps. cxviii. 165)... But they who at all times have God in mind (Tob. iv. 6), *careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace* (Eph. iv. 3), are never in conflict with the eternal law, saying in the prayer of faith: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* These are the peacemakers; these indeed are of one mind, and dwell in holy harmony, and shall be called by the eternal name of *sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ* (Rom. viii. 17)...



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SERMON ON STEPS OF THE ASCENT TO BLESSEDNESS FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH # 119 - 1



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

FEASTS OF ALL SAINTS

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 5: 1-12

by: Saint Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor

When our Lord Jesus Christ was preaching the Gospel of His Kingdom, and healing sickness of every kind, throughout the whole of Galilee, the fame of His wonders spread into all Syria: and from every part of Judaea great multitudes flocked to the heavenly Physician. For since the faith of uninstructed humanity is slow to believe in what it does not see, and to hope in what it does not know, it was necessary that those who were to be established in the divine teaching should be spurred on through receiving bodily favors and through seeing signs and wonders: so that they who began to feel the benefits of His so benign power, might have no doubts concerning His saving doctrine.

The Lord therefore, that He might transform His outward healings into inward remedies, that after He had brought healing to their bodies, He might then bring about the cure of their souls, calling His Disciples to Him, and going apart from the multitudes that thronged about Him, He went up into the solitude of a nearby mountain, so that in the lofty remoteness of this mystical place, He might instruct them in His higher purposes: signifying to them both by the nature of the place and by what was done there, that it was He Who in another time had deigned to speak with Moses: there however of a more terrible justice (*terribiliore justitia*), but here of a diviner clemency (*sacratiore clementia*), so that the promise might be fulfilled which He had spoken through Jeremiah the Prophet, saying: *Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda. After those days, saith the Lord: I will give my law in their hearts and on their minds will I write them* (Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. x. 16).

He therefore has spoken to the Apostles Who of old had spoken to Moses; and the swift hand of the Word writing, inscribed the decrees of the New Testament in the hearts of His Disciples. But no dense clouds gathered round about them as of old, nor were the people terrified of approaching the mountain because of fearful thunder and lightning (Heb. xii. 18); but in clear and tranquil speech

His words reached the ears of those who stand about Him: so that the soothing mercy of His Grace might remove the harshness of the Law, and the Spirit of adoption take away the fear that belonged to servitude (Rom. viii. 15).

His holy sentences announce the nature of Christ's Teaching; so that they who desire to attain to eternal blessedness may know the steps of this most blessed ascent. *Blessed, He says, are the poor in spirit...* He shows, that the kingdom of heaven shall be given to those whom humility of soul commends rather than the absence of riches. But it cannot be doubted that this blessing of humility is more easily attained by the poor than the rich...

After the preaching of this most blessed poverty, the Lord went on to say: *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* The mourning to which eternal consolation is here promised, has nothing in common with the mourning of this world...The source of the mourning of the saints is one thing; the cause of the refreshment of human tears another. God fearing sorrow mourns either its own sins, or those of others. It does not grieve over what divine justice has ordered, but mourns the evils which man's iniquity has committed...

The Lord then says: *Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land...* The earth that is promised the meek, and which shall be given to them as their possession (Ps. xxxvi. 11), is the flesh of the saints; which, as the reward of their humility, shall by their joyful resurrection be changed, and shall be clothed with the glory of immortality, and shall no more be contrary to the spirit, and shall dwell in perfect unity with the will of the heart...

After this the Lord adds the sentence: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill.* This hunger... desires to be saturated with the blessings of justice, to be admitted to the secret of all hidden things: to be filled with the Lord Himself. Blessed the soul that longs for this