

“We Can Be Happy?”

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Matthew 5.1-12, 1 Corinthians 1.18-31
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In the Apostles' Creed, which is the most important belief of the Christian Church, we say that "We believe in the Church that is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic". But why do we say that the Church is Holy? Why are bishops, priests or deacons saints? Why are all the members of the Church, the baptized, saints? Let's go to the basics: What does it mean to be a saint?

We might think that a saint is those extraordinary people, who have lived an extraordinary life, according to God's parameters; In the Roman Catholic tradition we would ensure that they are those who perform miracles or are those who are in heaven, close to God, that is why the churches bear their names, there are statues of them and days in which they are remembered. If we were asked that question today, we would surely answer like this or with a mixture of the three answers.

On the other hand, there is a beautiful story where saints are described as those who let the light of Christ pass through their lives, illuminating the entire Church, and that each saint gave a particular color to that light that came from God. . What a beautiful image!

No matter how common or very beautiful and inspiring these explanations are, they do not exhaust what it means for us to be saints. Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians 1.26-28 is very interesting for this purpose:

“Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are”.

The saints are not extraordinary people, they are ordinary people like those who are walking down the street at this moment or like those of us who are gathered here in prayer this Sunday. The saints are not people fallen from heaven, but people who, like us, had problems, difficulties, obstacles, hunger, needs and temptations. However, they are people who, without being wise, without belonging to important families, being weak and experiencing temptations face to face, did extraordinary things.

We can all be saints, indeed, we are called to be saints. Holiness is a vocation, a call that God makes to all of us. We don't have to be born into a wealthy family or be a priest or a monk or a nun to be. From our work, even if it is the humblest, we are called to be saints. If you are a lawyer, you are called to be a Holy lawyer; if you are a doctor, you are called to be a holy doctor; if you are an engineer or engineer, you are called to be a holy engineer; if you are a farm worker, you are called to be a peasant saint. Everyone, white or black, Latino or Anglo, documented or undocumented, everyone, without exception, can be saints.

And what is the path we must travel to be saints? Paul gives us the starting point:

“ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”

The starting point is to have faith in Christ and, in a particular way, in Christ crucified. No one can reach holiness without understanding that it is not through our means that we become saints, but because God loves us. If we become saints it is because God loved us to the point of sending his Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for love of us, not because we are very good and have put all our efforts into achieving it, but because God gave us love everyone without distinction; He does not love only those who come on Sunday, or those who come to this Church, or those who are Christians, or those who are up to date with their stewardship and offer every Sunday. God loves everyone, Christian or not, those who go to this Church or another, those who think differently and love differently; God loves everyone because he "makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."

The way in which we become saints, finally, is by living in our day to day the joy that Jesus manifests in the Gospel of Matthew that we read today:

- “Blessed are those who have the spirit of the poor”, because they do not become attached to things;
- “Blessed are those who suffer”, because their sufferings are united to those of Christ on the cross, they sympathize with the sufferings of others and seek to prevent others from suffering;
- “Blessed are the humble”, because they do not believe they are better or worse than anyone else, they simply know that they occupy a place in the world from which they can do a lot of good;
- “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice”, because they will seek to do justice not only for themselves, but for all human beings whose rights are underestimated;
- "Blessed are the compassionate", because they feel in their own flesh the sufferings of others and seek to support, relieve and console them;
- “Blessed are those with a pure heart”, because they do not have double intentions, nor do they harm others, but they see God in everyone and are capable of serving him;
- “Blessed are those who work for peace” and “for doing what is just”, because they are building the Kingdom of God in the midst of the world;
- "Blessed when people insult and mistreat you, and when they attack you with all kinds of lies because of me", because they are announcing the message of Jesus, which is a message of love for the whole world, a message that many they do not like it.

On this Sunday let us ask God to help us to be saints, recognizing that we can all be; that if we are saints it is by grace of the Father who first loved us; that we are saints doing what Jesus tells us and, finally, that it is the Holy Spirit, the gift of God that we receive in baptism, that moves us to holiness. Amen.