

Those who join together for life seek the way to happiness. Jesus replies by proclaiming the Beatitudes. These call on us for a continuing change of heart in order to become ever more like him.

19 *The way to happiness*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (5: 1-12)

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

“How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

“Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.”

Love is not a happiness to be kept only for ourselves. Lived according to the law of Christ, it is a light for the world, the light of God himself.

20 *A love that radiates*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (5: 13-16)

Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing,

and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.”

To remain united forever: that is the fondest desire of those in love. To live out this commitment, the couple is not alone for God is with them.

21 *The two shall become one*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (19: 3-6)

Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and to test him they said, “Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?”

He answered, “Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what god has united, man must not divide.”

To resist the trials of life, the home must be solidly constructed. To build on rock is to call upon the gospel and to put it into practice.

22 *The house built on rock*

(The shorter version concludes at the asterisks)

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (7: 21, 24-29)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“It is not those who say to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven.

“Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts of them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock.

“But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had!”

Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and his teaching made a deep impression on the people because he taught them with authority, and not like their own scribes.

To love truly is to love another “as oneself.” Jesus states that this commandment is as great as the commandment to love god.

23 *To love one another is to love God*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (22: 35-40)

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, "Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?"

Jesus said, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also."

The profound unity of the couple is what the Lord wants. It is God who guarantees it.

24 *What god has united, we must not divide*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark (10: 6-9)

Jesus said:

"From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide."

Jesus came to the wedding at Cana, joining with his friends in celebrating the marriage. Those who marry in his presence receive a great gift, far more beautiful than the best wine of the wedding feast.

25 *Jesus is present at the wedding*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (2: 1-11)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, “they have no wine.”

Jesus said, “Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water,” and they filled them to the brim. “Draw some out now,” he told them, “and take it to the steward.”

They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from – only the servants who had drawn the water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said, “People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.”

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

To love as Jesus wants us to love is to give our life to those we love. Jesus knows what it is to love: he has given his life for us.

26 *To love is to give one's life*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (15: 9-12)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.”

To love with a true love is always to participate in Christ’s love. As we love in this way we are not merely obedient like servants; rather we are entering into the very intimacy that God offers to his friends.

27 *Love, as I have loved you*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (15: 12-16)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master’s business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father.

“You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.”

Jesus prays for his disciples that they may be completely one, just as God is. He promises that he will fill them with his own love.

28 *May they be completely one*

(The shorter version concludes at the asterisks)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (17: 20-26)

When the hour came for him to pass from this world to the Father, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed, saying:

“I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one.

“Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.”