



Let us go out to meet Jesus.  
He opens the gate to happiness for us!

## Jesus and Pilate

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“My kingdom does not belong to this world.” Pilate is relieved. Ah, Pilate, you didn’t understand correctly! Jesus did not say, “My kingdom is not in this world” but “My kingdom does not belong to this world.” [...] <sup>(1)</sup>

Yes, He is king. He just needs to be solemnly enthroned. Well, now the long ceremony of Jesus’

royal coronation begins. Pilate himself will organize the first step by setting up on earth the throne of the cross. As for the kingdom, it is true that for the time being, it is limited to Jesus alone. [...] <sup>(2)</sup>

Before Pilate, Jesus witnessed to a truth that goes beyond that of politicians, historians, scientists and sociologists.





Pilate had asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” For each one of us, the question is the following: Jesus, are you the one who reigns in my heart and mind? [...]

“This Beatitude announces the same happiness as the first one: the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the persecuted as it does to the poor in spirit. We thus understand that we have reached the end of our journey revealed in the previous proclamations.

Poverty in spirit, mourning, meekness, thirsting for holiness, mercy, purity of heart and peacemaking may lead to persecution because of Christ. However, this persecution is ultimately a cause of joy and of great reward in heaven. The way of the Beatitudes is an Easter path that leads us from a life in accord with the world to one of

God, from a life governed by the flesh — that is by selfishness — to one guided by the Spirit.

With its idols, its compromises and its priorities, the world cannot accept this kind of life. The “structures of sin,” which are often produced by the human mind and are extraneous to the Spirit of truth that the world cannot receive (cf. Jn 14:17), necessarily reject poverty or meekness or purity and declare life according to the Gospel as a mistake and a problem and thus as something to isolate. This is what the world thinks: “These people are idealists or fanatics...” This is how they think.

If the world lives as a function of money, then anyone who demonstrates that life can be lived in self-giving and sacrifice becomes a nuisance to the system of greed. This word





“nuisance” is key because Christian witness, which is so good for many people who follow it, bothers those who have a worldly mindset. They see it as chastising. When holiness appears and the life of the children of God emerges, there is something uncomfortable in that beauty that demands taking a stance: either to allow oneself to be questioned and to open oneself to the good or reject that light and harden one’s heart, even to the point of oppression and fury (cf. Wis 2:14-15). It is interesting and striking to note how hostility grows to fury in the persecution of martyrs. Just look at the persecutions of the last century, of the European dictatorships: how does one get to rage against Christians, against Christian witness and against the heroism of Christians?

But this demonstrates that the tragedy of persecution is also the place of liberation from subjection to the success, vainglory and compromise of the world. What makes those who are rejected by the world because of Christ rejoice? They rejoice at having found something that has more



value than the entire world. Indeed: “For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mk 8:36) What is the advantage there?

It is painful to recall that in this very moment, there are many Christians in various parts of the world who are suffering from persecution, and we must hope and pray that their trials will soon end. They are many: today’s martyrs outnumber the martyrs of the first centuries. Let us express our closeness to these brothers and sisters. We are a single body and these Christians are the bleeding limbs of the

body of Christ who is the Church.

But we also have to be careful not to read this Beatitude from a self-pitying, victimized perspective. In fact, mankind’s contempt is not always synonymous with persecution: indeed, shortly later, Jesus tells Christians that they are the “salt of the earth” and warns against the danger of “losing their taste” because in that case, salt “is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men” (Mt 5:13). Thus, when we lose



the taste of Christ and the Gospel, there is also contempt, which is our fault.

We have to be faithful to the humble way of the Beatitudes because it leads us to be of Christ and not of the world. It is worth remembering the journey of Saint Paul. When he thought he was a righteous person, he was in fact a persecutor, but when he found out he was a persecutor, he became a man of love who rejoiced in the suffering of the persecution inflicted on him (cf. Col 1:24).

If God grants us the grace to be more like the Crucified Christ and joined to his Passion, then exclusion and persecution are the manifestation of new life. This life is the same as the life of Christ who was “despised and rejected by men” for our salvation (cf. Is 53:3; Acts 8:30-35). Welcoming His Spirit can lead us to have so much love in our heart as to offer our life for the world without making compromises with its deceit and accepting its rejection.







Compromises with the world are dangerous: Christians are always tempted to make compromises with the world, with the spirit of the world. This — rejecting compromises and journeying on the way of Jesus Christ — is the life of the Kingdom of Heaven, the greatest joy and true happiness. In persecutions there is always the presence of Jesus who accompanies us, the presence of Jesus who comforts us and the strength of the Holy Spirit that helps us to go forward. Let us not be discouraged when a life that is faithful to the Gospel draws persecution from people. There is the Holy Spirit who sustains us in this journey. <sup>(3)</sup>

**“Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness!”**

(1) <http://toulouse.dominicains.com/homelie/le-christ-roi-jn-18-33-37/>

(2) Ibid.

(3) POPE FRANCIS: GENERAL AUDIENCE – Wednesday, April 29, 2020



# Prayer

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Lord, You are with all abandoned, infirm or disgraced, unjustly incarcerated or painfully tortured people, You who suffered injustice like them. Support those who fight for justice and for human happiness. Help me not to deprive anyone of respect or love. Give me the strength, Lord, to engage in such a battle, even if it must be at the cost of my peace.

(Gilbert Cesbron)