

REFLECTION FOR THE 6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Surely, we can all agree that man's greatest desire is to be happy; but what can we do to achieve the happiness we desire? Our society so often presents happiness to us in a bottle of perfume, as a sports car, in being famous, or having health and money. At the same time, it insists that the person must be the center of existence, placing an exaggerated value on the "I", creating an omnipresent egocentric culture. However, sacred scripture points to completely different paths as the way to authentic happiness. In this Sunday's readings, the Word of God shows us how we can be happy, in stark contrast to what the world tells us.

In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah tells us that it is by putting our trust in the Lord that we discover the paths to an authentic life. The one who trusts in the Lord *"is like a tree planted by water, that sends its roots by the stream, and does not fear when the heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit"*. God is the source of true happiness. If we place our hope in him, our hearts will be calm, knowing that we have someone who watches over us, who loves us, who always accompanies us in life. After all, true happiness lies in love, and God is eternal Love. That is why we respond to the first reading with Psalm 1, singing with the psalmist: *"Blessed is the man who has placed his trust in the LORD."*

In the second reading, St. Paul gives us the fundamental reason for our hope in God: to know that our ultimate end is eternal life, to live eternally, resurrected in Christ Jesus. The foundation for this lies in Christ, who died but rose again. He conquered death so that he could open the way to eternal life for us. Saint Paul tells us, *"If Christ has not been raised, you are still in your sins... If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate of all people. But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep."* If we die with Christ, we will live with Christ forever. This is our faith, and it is one of the great reasons for our hope in God, giving us a whole sense of joyful fulfillment to our existence.

In the Gospel, St. Luke shows us the path to happiness pointed out by Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that blessed and happy are the poor, the hungry, those who mourn, those who are hated and persecuted because of their faith in Christ. They are blessed and happy because their hope is not in power, money, or fame but in God, making Him their treasure. It is a treasure that is never lost, a treasure that lasts forever.

Let's look for the paths to authentic happiness, knowing that they involve trusting in the Lord, making him our great wealth and opting for a life with God; knowing that this requires us to know how to be people of peace, mercy, and love; because only when we love are we with God and discover the secret of true happiness.

Amen.