

# *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake...*

Homily, 30th July, 2016

Mat 5,10

father G. Paparone o.p.

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*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

This is the Alleluia verse that precedes the reading of the Gospel, in which it is told of the death of John the Baptist, who was killed by Herod because of his preaching and was calling the king to observe the law of the Lord and not to live as a concubine.

John the Baptist is a prophet who has the task to denounce the misdeeds of this bloody Middle Eastern satrap.

Even in the first reading, taken from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, it is told of the risk that the prophet himself ran to be killed at the hands of the leaders of the people, because he had condemned acts and behaviour of these priests who desecrated the Temple.

Also Jesus did something similar in the episode of the purification of the Temple, when he threw out the sellers.

Dearest, **in every man there is always the tendency to be absorbed by the world, to deviate from the Word of God and satisfy their own desires, their ambitions, their egoism...**

Fortunately, the Lord always creates for us prophets, persons to which He assigns the difficult task of calling the people to conversion, the believers to live the Word of God.

Normally, these people are likely to be persecuted or killed, because, obviously, or you convert or, if you do not want to convert, you must silence the one who scolds and accuses you.

Here is **the foundation of the beatitude (*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*): the disciple of the Lord must live for the good and the truth.**

**These values must be sought and applied in all circumstances of our existence.**

**And by the very fact that they are followed and put into practice, of course they arouse the negative reaction of those who think otherwise.**

Especially, when people do not let themselves be corrupted and, therefore, are likely to be persecuted.

We can only take a very recent small example, considering the events of all states, but especially those of Turkey, where – as far as we know through media – there is a conflict that has come publicly to outright persecution...

*Persecuted for righteousness' sake: it is a bliss, because defending justice and truth means to be on God's side, fight the same battle of God.*

So, automatically, we belong to the Kingdom: *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

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They will surely be given a kingdom at the end of the times, but **the bliss and the *Kingdom* come already in our life because when one fights for the truth and decides in his heart to live for the good and the truth, at that time he has already entered the Kingdom of heaven.**

So, let us ask the Lord to give us the intelligence to understand that every day we can enter the Kingdom of heaven, we can move forward in it to the extent that we put into practice the Word of God.

Praised be Jesus Christ.