

The ancient great philosopher Aristotle noted that all people seek happiness  
Now people disagree about what will bring them happiness, but everyone wants it  
Twenty-four hours a day we are making decisions on what will make us most happy  
Some seek happiness in money, some in fame, some in cars, some in technology, some in relationships  
Some of these things make us happy and some don't  
Some make us happy only briefly, and some make us happy for a life-time  
Aristotle believed that the ethical person would consistently choose the thing that brings true and lasting happiness  
However, in our fallenness, we often choose those things that may bring us temporary happiness, but in the end leave us  
more empty than before  
We, like our society, often become short-sighted  
That is why the words of the readings and the Gospel strike us so hard  
They tell us to act in ways that seem counter to our achieving happiness  
In the first reading we hear God calling us to be humble, lowly, and to seek humility  
In the second reading Paul reminds us that we are fools in the eyes of the world  
Even today, the world thinks we are crazy for believing that some guy two thousand years ago wasn't just any ordinary  
man, but the incarnation of God himself - that the second person of the Trinity came to earth to seek and save the  
lost  
Paul also talks about how many of the disciples were poor, weak, lowly, and despised  
We don't often think of ourselves this way, but the truth is, when it comes to our souls, when it comes to our relationship  
with Christ, we are poor, weak, lowly, and despised  
How many of us are caring around secrets, lies, and sins that make us feel despised, lowly, weak, and poor?  
This is obviously not where God wants us to end up  
He wants us to have life to the full  
But this is not a bad place to be  
It is only when we realize we cannot make ourselves happy that we become free to let go and let God  
When we let go and lean on God to give us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; then and only then do  
we really truly become wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed  
It is at this point that we can no longer boast in ourselves  
Instead we can only do as Paul says, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."  
This spiritual journey from hitting rock bottom to seeing and realizing the fullness of God's love for us is seen in the  
beatitudes

As we have said, we must first be poor in spirit - we must admit that we cannot save ourselves - what we lack in God's love cannot be filled up with selfishness - this may seem like happiness, but it only leads to loneliness, darkness, and death

Once we accept our poverty of spirit, we can mourn the state of our souls - If we can do this, God will comfort us - he will show us that we are not the sum of our sins and failings

Once we accept acknowledge the state of our souls and mourn them, we realize we have nothing on God - When we were kids, we would lose every argument about what we deserve because in the end everything we have was a gift from our parents - the same is true for God - a true meek heart realizes that he or she owes God for everything good in his or her life

And then it starts to get good

Then we start to hunger and thirst for righteousness - We seek to be righteous, not because it is the right thing to be, but because we love God that much that we want to be obedient to him

And then in the spiritual journey of the soul, we start to go from within to without

We are called to be merciful

We are called to be clean of heart - this would be purity of thoughts and actions

We are called to be peacemakers - true peacemakers bring everyone to the truth - a peace where everyone just agrees to leave each other alone to continue to believe things that are not true is not a true peace - fighting for true peace makes us children of God

By speaking for the truth, for standing up for righteousness, we will be persecuted

I, in my fallenness, hesitated to make my Facebook profile picture a blue square that says Pro-life because a part of me is still worried about what others will think of me

Finally, there may a come a time in a spiritual journey that God gives you the ultimate test - a test where people not only insult you and persecute you, but they accuse you falsely and make your life miserable because of your faith in Christ and his Church

Jesus tells his followers to rejoice and be glad - for great is your reward in heaven

I hope none of us every have to face this type of opposition to our faith, but pray that if you do, you will have the faith and strength to stand up for Christ

I think sometimes being a Christian gets too easy in America - Not that I want Christians to be persecuted in America, but we need to have heroic faith - the faith you often see displayed in the lives of the saints

Pray and work to have heroic faith

When we have heroic faith, we will have an unbreakable bond and relationship with Christ

And when we have an unbreakable bond and relationship with Christ, we will have true happiness - a happiness that can never be taken away - this is the type of happiness we all desire - a happiness only God can give