
Pope Francis: audience, “loneliness and unhappiness” arising from need to be “someone”

“We have to make something of ourselves, to be someone... We have to make ourselves a name... This is what leads us to loneliness and unhappiness”. This is according to Pope Francis, who dedicated his audience today to the first of the eight Beatitudes in Matthew’s Gospel: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven”. “If I have to be ‘someone’, then I am in competition with others and I live in an obsessive concern for my own ego”, Pope Francis remarked: “If I do not accept to be poor, then I will hate everything that reminds me of my frailty”. “For this frailty does not allow me to become an important person, a rich”, he added off the cuff: “Not only money, but fame, everything”. The “paradoxical proclamation” of the first Beatitude, for the Pope, is “a surprising way and a strange object of bliss: poverty”. “What is meant here by the word ‘poor’?”, Pope Francis asked. “If Matthew was using this word only, then its meaning would be simply economic, that is, it would indicate people with little or no means of support who need the help of others”. But the Gospel of Matthew, unlike Luke’s, speaks of the “poor in spirit”. “The Spirit - according to the Bible - is the breath of life that God has communicated to Adam”, the Pope recalled. “It is our most intimate dimension, let’s say the spiritual dimension, that makes us human persons, the deep core of our being”. “The ‘poor in spirit’, then, are those who feel and are poor, beggars, in the depths of their being”, Pope Francis continued: “Jesus calls them blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. How many times we have been told the opposite! We have to make something of ourselves, to be someone... We have to make ourselves a name... This is what leads us to loneliness and unhappiness”.

Valentina Bombelli