

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus came down with the Twelve and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said:

‘How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God. Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied. Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh.

Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

‘But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now.

Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep.

‘Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.’

(Luke 6:17; 20–26)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- This text is commonly known as ‘the Beatitudes’, from the Latin meaning ‘blessing’.
- Both Matthew and Luke report this famous sermon of Jesus, but with slight differences.
- The main difference is that Luke balances the ‘blessings’ with a series of ‘woes’ aimed at would-be disciples who are still bound up with the signs of success in this world.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Luke takes care to alert us to who is present at this gathering. There are the newly formed twelve special friends of Jesus, as well as many other disciples, and both Jews and foreigners who come out of curiosity. The words of Jesus are meant for all but are especially addressed to his disciples.

Luke does not speak of ‘the poor in spirit’ or ‘those who hunger and thirst for justice’ as Matthew does. Luke is much more interested in the lived experience of those who are literally poor, hungry and suffering. They were the ones who were persecuted under the status quo of their day, and it was they who had an openness to the new order announced by Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom. The powerful, who directed the established order of the day, could not bear such a challenge to their own position and thus they will ‘drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal’ for preaching the new order of God’s kingdom. Such is the challenge to those who are disciples.

- How do you feel about the fact that Jesus’ words challenge many of the things we think we need to be happy and blessed?
- Reflect on what makes you truly happy.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What are your ultimate pursuits?
- What would you see reversed in our present order?
- Choose one of the Beatitudes that is particularly applicable to you and live it out this week. Alternatively, if the language of the ‘woes’ seems aimed at you, take steps to make yourself a little less comfortable or to switch your attention to other things.
- Remember a time of difficulty or suffering in your own life. Was there a blessing for you hidden in that experience? How and when did you come to realise the blessing born of pain? Share your stories.
- This week, repeat the response to the psalm often:
Happy are they who hope in the Lord.

