

Cycle A – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Jan. 29, 2023

“Blessed are the peacemakers ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 146)

Leader: *The Lord who keeps faith forever,
 God gives justice for the oppressed.*

All: **God gives food to the hungry.
 The Lord sets the prisoners free.**

Leader: *The Lord opens the eyes of the blind
 and lifts up those who are bowed down;*

All: **the Lord loves the righteous
 and watches over the stranger.
 Amen**



Gospel – Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes are well-known among both Christians and non-Christians. They have become the signature of the Christian message, forming the substance of Jesus’ teaching. To call the poor, the mourning, the hungry, the persecuted “blessed” seems at first reading ludicrous – another upside-down move on God’s part. When we realize that Jesus makes these pronouncements from the perspective of God’s glory in which he himself shares, we realize that the poor, the mourning, the hungry, the persecuted are all identified with the Son of God who died on the cross: poor, despised and falsely condemned. It is Jesus’ capacity to hold divinity and humanity in loving tension in his moment of death, which makes us truly blessed in all our afflictions.

1. Which Beatitude connects to a real experience for you?
2. How do you see blessedness operate in the experiences of life mentioned in the Beatitudes?
3. Read Luke’s version of the same event – Luke 6: 20-26 – what are some similarities and differences, compared to Matthew’s version?

LIVING THE WORD

What is God’s challenge for me/us this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For those who mourn, who suffer poverty and injustice, who ache to bring peace in the world, and for all those who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

Invite other intentions, and end with “Our Father ...”

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: God of the poor and the meek,
you took on our human poverty in your Son Jesus,
look upon us in our times of need.

All: **Raise us to the dignity of your love**
especially in times of sorrow and affliction.

Leader: *May we bless one another's grief and pain
with the gift of your love and mercy.*

All: **May we thus share in the peace of Christ
who suffered in order that we may be blessed.
Amen.**

Leader: *Let us share with one another the sign of Christ's Peace.*