

The Readings and Deacon Dan's Homily for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 29, 2023



Reading 1

Zep 2:3; 3:12-13

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth,
who have observed his law;
seek justice, seek humility;
perhaps you may be sheltered
on the day of the LORD's anger.

But I will leave as a remnant in your midst
a people humble and lowly,
who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD:
the remnant of Israel.
They shall do no wrong
and speak no lies;
nor shall there be found in their mouths
a deceitful tongue;
they shall pasture and couch their flocks
with none to disturb them.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

R. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

The LORD keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets captives free.

R. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

The LORD gives sight to the blind;
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.
The LORD loves the just;
the LORD protects strangers.

R. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

The fatherless and the widow the LORD sustains,
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.
The LORD shall reign forever;
your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

R. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

Reading 2

1 Cor 1:26-31

Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters.

Not many of you were wise by human standards,
not many were powerful,
not many were of noble birth.

Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise,
and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong,
and God chose the lowly and despised of the world,
those who count for nothing,

to reduce to nothing those who are something,
so that no human being might boast before God.

It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus,
who became for us wisdom from God,
as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,
so that, as it is written,

"Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."

Alleluia

Mt 5:12a

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad;
your reward will be great in heaven.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mt 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain,
and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven."

HOMILY

Our Lord, Jesus, when he taught the people from the mountain said, *“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”* He is telling us that there is joy, lasting joy/happiness, in this time we have in this earthly lifetime. Not that our lives won’t include suffering and sacrifice, because they do. But, that a happiness can be found in following him, through his word and example.

One of his most often quoted passages is the Sermon on the Mount we just heard, the Beatitudes; beatitude, meaning happy. How to have a happy life.

This morning I’d like to mainly focus on married couples. However, everything I have to say; what Jesus said in this Gospel passage applies to all people; married, single, widowed, vowed...all people. But, I’m going to have a special focus on the married because yesterday our Parish hosted the first of two Saturday devoted to those who are married, with the Alpha Marriage Course; and because on Thursday of this week Terri and I will celebrate our 49th anniversary. So, we will be officially begin our 50th anniversary, two-year long celebration of being hitched for 50 years.

There is the practical bit of advice for us husbands in Jesus Beatitudes, *“Happy wife, happy life.”*

But, Jesus had much more in mind. The Beatitudes are a way of a happiness, a way of joy that surpasses in depth and as a lasting joy, all worldly things that give happiness, because it is a joy that is based on receiving God’s love and giving God’s love to others.

Jesus’ teaching begins with “Blessed are the poor in spirit”. Billy Graham puts it this way, “we must be humble in our spirits. If you put the word “humble” in place of the word “poor,” you will understand what He meant.” Humility in marriage is recognizing that together the couple comes to fullness. Each person having their own gifts, not greater than or more valuable than the other. Complementarity is the coming together of two people in Marriage like two puzzle pieces, each with their own characteristics, each with their own gifts.

There are nine ways to happiness that Jesus speaks of; seven of these can be translated into “How to have a happy marriage.” Or, how to have a happy relationship with anyone who is close to you.

“Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.” The Spirit comforts those who are honest about their own failure and humble enough to ask for forgiveness and healing. Again, we see humility as a needed virtue, and because, even in the most loving households, we will hurt one another, we need to ask for forgiveness.

“Blessed are the meek...”. Meekness can be described as being willing to forego one’s rights for the benefit of someone else, which models the attitude of Jesus Christ who said, “I came to serve, not to be served.” Striving for power and prestige is not the path to blessedness; meekness is.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness...” *Righteousness* speaks of being in right relationship with God and with other people. And, right relationship within marriage can mean loving as God loves. That is, loving another for the good of the other. This is not manipulative, not a power struggle, not a gotcha relationship, not a what’s in it for me relationship, but, rather a relationship, a love that is self-giving, self-emptying for the other person. The idea of right relationships with others forms the link in the chain to the next section of the Beatitudes.

“Blessed are the merciful...” When we give forgiveness, we are merciful, we are promised to be shown mercy. When we give mercy, we give the other person the freedom from any guilt, and give ourselves the freedom from carrying around a grudge that only weighs us down.

“Blessed are the clean of heart...” A pure heart has no hypocrisy, no [guile](#), no hidden motives. The pure heart is marked by transparency and an uncompromising desire to please God in all things, and in doing so, please our spouse. It is more than an *external* purity of behavior; it is an *internal* purity of soul.

And, lastly, “Blessed are the peacemakers...”. Two people living together; two people living together with children; two people living together with children, and bills, and a house payment, and jobs and a whatever else...these two people will have disagreements, conflict, fights. Its only human. Always seeking peace for the family not only requires good conflict resolution strategies, but also coming to God for help through prayer. That is why peacemakers will be called children of God because they recognize that their peace is in God can be gotten through childlike behavior; simplicity, honesty, vulnerability, no manipulation.

Now, I know this all may sound a bit like “do this” and “don’t do that”; and there are probably a hundred books out there on how to live a joyful, happy marriage. But, what we’ve heard from Holy Scripture this morning, what we, hear in the readings for this day of our marriages, or our relationships with other people, come from the Author of Life, our Creator, and what we’ve heard proclaimed is the living Word of God come to our hearing through the work of the Holy Spirit.

So, let us take the advice of Jesus when he said, “those who have ears should listen.” I’ll conclude with three simple bits of advice of Pope Francis when he spoke with some newlyweds at St. Peter’s in Rome. He said, first, “Ask permission. May I? We must learn to ask: May I do this? Would you like that we do this? Asking for agreement is to enter into the lives of others with courtesy.

Second, give thanks. Say thank you. Give thanks to your wife for simple things, making your coffee in the morning, watering the lawn, picking up the mail. Say it with expression and say it often.

And, three; Ask forgiveness. I am sorry. Excuse me. We each make so may errors, big mistakes and little ones. Do not go to bed without saying you’re sorry. We’ll start again, fresh

tomorrow. Don't carry around grudges. Apologize and move on. Remember, just because you don't think you offended the other, doesn't mean she isn't offended. Just say I'm sorry.

The Pope didn't include this one, but after almost 49 years of marriage to a woman who get more beautiful every time I look at her, I have one to add to Francis' three: tell each other you love her, or him. Say "I love you" often and tell her why. And, then thank God for him or her.