

SMALL GROUP REFLECTIONS
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 13, 2022

JER 17:5-8; 1 COR 15: 45-49; LK 6: 27-38

GOSPEL OF LUKE

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon.

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.



*“Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!
Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.
For their ancestors treated the prophets
in the same way. But woe to you who are
rich, for you have received your consolation
Woe to you who are filled now, for you
will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will grieve and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false
prophets in this way.”*

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

FIRST READING: Jeremiah conducts his ministry during a time when Israel’s leaders shift their trust in God to the pagan leaders. Those who place their whole trust in people are compared to a “barren bush in the desert.” The wise who place their trust in God are compared to a tree planted by the waterside. Such people do not escape the “heat” but are productive because they are rooted in God and trust in His love.

SECOND READING: St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is foolish to think of hope in the Lord with only an “earthly” vision since God desires nothing less than our eternal happiness. Paul reminds us to never forget the Resurrection that is our restoration and our salvation.

GOSPEL: This weekend and next weekend, we will listen to excerpts from what may be the most challenging verses in Luke’s gospel, his “Sermon on the Plain.” Jesus reveals the Beatitudes, taking the accepted beliefs of his day and standing them on their heads. He names four groups of people who would have been regarded as very blest, and states that they are anything but blest. And he takes four groups regarded as cursed and pronounced them blest. Jesus is describing here the character of the life of a Christian whose trust is firmly rooted in God. Jesus is preparing the apostles for what they must do when he sends them to build the Church. To trust, leads to hope – and propels us along the way of mission.

BLESSINGS AND WOES: Take a moment to read Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5.1-1) compared to Luke's Sermon on the Plain that we hear this Sunday. Do you see the difference?

- What do the different settings tell you about Jesus approach to teaching – at least from the perspective of the writers? [On the Plain vs. On the Mount]
- How are the messages of what Jesus was teaching the same? Different? [Hint - In Matthew you don't have the "blessings" contrasted with the "woes" that Luke records.] How does Luke's approach bring in another way of thinking?

This message of love is for all people, and is a call for action to help others. But we need to understand that there are many different kinds of poverty, hunger and hatred.

- Can you identify a hunger that someone is suffering from, and this may be a hunger due to isolation or loneliness? Can you help someone who may be suffering from spiritual hunger by using the gifts that God has given you?

Jesus offers us the Beatitudes and shows us how to turn negatives (poverty, hunger, hatred) into opportunities to show the special love that God has for those who suffer and feel left behind.

- Can you think of an experience that follows this teaching?
- How does hope in the Lord factor? Consider all 3 readings,
- How does trust in the Lord play a role in whether we boldly take on our mission for others?

• **BLESSINGS, WOES, TRUST AND HOPE:** When we are struggling with the woes, it may be helpful to sit down and focus on the blessings we are experiencing... Are there 2-3 personal beatitudes (woe + blessing) you can think of that bring in your trust and hope in the Lord?

PARISH INVITATIONS

Fr. Charlie and Bishop Noonan extend to you the invitation Pope Francis is sharing to journey together, listen and converse about our faith and our Church. It's called the Synod on Synodality – in simpler terms, praying to the Holy Spirit to guide us as we come together for small group listening sessions to talk about our Church's future, ministry, our community, our mission – Feb. 16-27 at the Parish. Come for fellowship, prayer, conversation, refreshment. **SIGN UP FOR THE PARISH SYNOD**, English and Spanish – and check out the Topics & Reflection questions and more.

<https://www.stmarymagdalen.org/ParishInfo/synod/ParishSynod.htm>

FIRST, WE PRAY:

Tuesday, February 15 at 7PM in the Church -- Fr. Charlie will lead a special prayer service on the Eve of our Synod launch, including a procession of the Synod symbols to open our synodal journey, a rite of blessing to call upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, meditative music, breaking open the Word and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – a Holy Night for the Synod!



Sources: *Ascension Catholic*

