

Sunday Message

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 16 February 2025 • Psalter Week 2

COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT

LUKE 6:17,20-26



In the Old Testament, Moses came down a mountain to announce God's word - the Ten Commandments - to his people.

In today's Gospel Jesus also descends a mountain, to announce his word to the assembled crowd. He preaches with beatitudes and woes. (Luke's account of the beatitudes is different to Matthew's. Matthew has nine beatitudes. Luke has four beatitudes but also four woes.)

For anyone who is poor, hungry, who weeps, who is hated, Jesus has comforting words. He calls these people blessed. But for those who are rich, who are full, who laugh, and who are honoured, he has harsh words. Woe to you, he tells them.

Jesus' words can seem puzzling and severe. They turn our commonly accepted notion of what is good and bad upside down. He seems to be saying that it's a good thing to be poor, hungry, weeping and hurt; a bad thing to be rich, well fed, laughing, and to be spoken well of.

But Jesus isn't lauding poverty, hunger or hurt as things to be desired in themselves. They are not to be sought after. They should be avoided, if possible. Nor is Jesus condemning a social class. As he knows only too well, virtues and vices do not belong to any one particular group.

Jesus' beatitudes are addressed to his disciples, to those who are involved in building God's kingdom. And they are words of consolation and of promise. Jesus knows that things won't be easy for them. They will suffer for preaching the Gospel. They will face rejection, betrayal, and tears. But the promise is of better things to come. Jesus is assuring his disciples that while a life dedicated to God will bring difficulties and hardships, God will overcome them. Provided they remain faithful, their tears will turn to laughter. They will be blessed. ■

SAY

"Lord, give me the courage to speak your truth always. Amen."

LEARN

The poor and the abandoned are especially close to God's heart. Social solidarity is a keystone of the Christian life.



DO

Reflect on today's Gospel. What values do you live by?

PRAY

There is so much inequality and injustice in our world. Pray for a more just world.

REFLECT

I never got to meet him. On the very day I arrived in the Philippines - 11 July 1985 - Rudy Romano was reported missing. Rudy was a Redemptorist priest based in the city of Cebu. He left the monastery on his motorbike that day and never returned. Ominously, his bike was discovered on a street downtown, and locals described how he had been surrounded by what looked like military vehicles. He had been bundled into a truck which sped away.

Immediately, the Redemptorists began a campaign to find Rudy. Search parties were sent out, demonstrations were held, posters were distributed, local and national media were contacted. An appeal was made to President Ferdinand Marcos to intervene, while pressure was piled on him from Ireland, the Vatican and around the world. But Rudy was never found. It became clear early on that he had been murdered by the military who had then dumped his body.

Rudy was martyred because of his work for justice. He was an outspoken critic of the repressive Marcos regime, so they decided

to silence him. Rudy heard the cry of the poor, he stood alongside those without a voice, and the authorities couldn't tolerate it. He was a nuisance, so they had to shut him up. In speaking out on behalf of the poor, Rudy Romano was living the beatitudes.

The Sermon on the Mount is the first great sermon in Matthew's account of the life of Jesus. Luke doesn't have a 'Sermon on the Mount.' Instead, he has what is called 'The Sermon on the Plain.' Though shorter than Matthew's version, it contains much of the same material.

But a major difference between them is that Luke adds a series of 'woe-sayings.' 'Woe to you (or alas for you) who are rich... who have your fill ... who laugh now ...' In using these woe sayings, Luke is going back to the Old Testament prophets, who often condemned the people to whom they preached by using woe sayings. Just as the beatitude sayings are using a different standard to judge people as fortunate, the woe sayings use a different standard to measure misfortune. One might expect the rich, those with enough to eat, those the

world considers fortunate, to be the happy ones. But that's not how Luke sees it.

In drawing this sharp contrast, Luke is pointing to Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). The mother of Jesus praises God for overturning the social and political order of the world - toppling the thrones of the powerful and lifting up those at the bottom of the heap, filling the hungry with good things, sending the rich away empty.

For Luke, reversing the oppressive order of the world is part of the Messiah's work, part of the work of the Gospel.

Despite the progress of recent decades, much remains to be done to create a just world. Many millions remain hungry, the poor still weep bitterly, those who fight for justice are opposed and imprisoned. Is it all a pipe dream? Or is it a challenge to rethink the values we live by? We may not have to risk our lives, as Rudy Romano did, for the Gospel. But we must be a voice of justice and truth in our time and place, speaking always with courage. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.*

COLLECT

O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Jeremiah 17:5-8

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

Thus says the LORD:

'Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the LORD.
He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

'Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 1:1-2. 3. 4. 6. R. Psalm 40(39):5a

R: Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the LORD.

1. Blessed indeed is the man
who follows not the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the path with sinners,
nor abides in the company of scorners,
but whose delight is the law of the LORD,
and who ponders his law day and night. *R.*
2. He is like a tree that is planted
beside the flowing waters,
that yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves shall never fade;
and all that he does shall prosper. *R.*
3. Not so are the wicked, not so!
For they, like winnowed chaff,
shall be driven away by the wind.
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. *R.*

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 15:12. 16-20

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters: If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead,
how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.
And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are
still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ
have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of
all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from
the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Luke 6:23ab

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Rejoice and leap for joy, says the Lord,
for behold, your reward is great in heaven.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Luke 6:17. 20-26

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

At that time: Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a level
place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of
people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast of Tyre
and Sidon. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:
'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude you, and revile you, and spurn your
name as evil

on account of the Son of Man!

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy,
for behold, your reward is great in heaven;
for so their fathers did to the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you, when all people speak well of you,
for so their fathers did to the false prophets.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray,
cleanse and renew us
and may it become for those who do your will
the source of eternal reward.
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*They ate and had their fill,
and what they craved the Lord gave them;
they were not disappointed in what they craved.*

Or

*God so loved the world
that he gave his Only Begotten Son,
so that all who believe in him may not perish,
but may have eternal life.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having fed upon these heavenly delights,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may always long
for that food by which we truly live.
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*