CELEBRATING AT HOME

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Catching the vision (Matthew 5:1-12)

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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord is here, present among us.
We are gathered with the whole Church in this moment of prayer.

Preparing to hear the Word

Lord Jesus,
you are our way.

Christ Jesus,
you are our truth.

Lord Jesus,
you are our life.

Scripture Reading *(Matthew 5:1-12)*

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle:
they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

Reflection - *Catching the vision*

Last Sunday's Gospel introduced the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, his call to repentance, the choice of some disciples and the spread of his fame.

Now, over the next four Sundays, the church will take us on a journey through Jesus' teaching in Chapters 5-7 of Matthew's Gospel. These chapters form the *Sermon on the Mount*. Each Sunday's Gospel builds on the one before – they are part of this first discourse in Matthew's Gospel and need to be understood in a connected sense, not as a series of isolated sayings.

The text we know as the 'Beatitudes' introduces Jesus' teaching about the kingdom, discipleship, the true meaning of the Law and true righteousness (virtue), interior disposition of the heart against external fulfilment of Law, trust in God and keeping the Kingdom as the focus of the disciple's life.

Matthew's beatitudes have been understood as a pattern of life for the follower of Jesus. Put in the context of Jesus' call to conversion (the idea of radical change and transformation), those willing to be transformed will enjoy the blessings of the kingdom as their reward.

To be 'poor in spirit', to experience sadness ('mourn') because of the present state of affairs, to be gentle and unselfish rather than on the make, to have a passionate commitment to justice, to exercise mercy instead of taking advantage, to be 'pure in heart', to be 'peacemakers', to endure persecution and calumny for the sake of the right way of life ('righteousness') and allegiance to Christ: all these things make one vulnerable here and now, entailing much loss. The vulnerable make the world safe for humanity.*

For those who live according to the heart of God as Jesus reveals it, the blessings of the Kingdom will be theirs, their place in the household of God will be assured and they will be making the world a safe place for their brothers and sisters.

*Byrne, Brendan, Lifting the Burden: reading Matthew's Gospel in the Church Today. St Pauls, 2004, pp55-57

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayers of Intercession

You chose us before we were born.
May we transform and love the world.

When we face ridicule and judgement
give us your enduring strength.

May we be a source of gentleness and peace,
comfort and mercy to all we meet.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Closing Prayer

Eternal God,
give us strength to follow your call,
so that your truth may live in our hearts
and reflect peace to all whom we meet.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Blessing

May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May the Lord keep us safe from all evil
and lead us to life everlasting.
Amen.

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.

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