

## **The important of feeding only on God**

c-c-6th Sunday of Ordinary Time - 2022

Sometimes we have to stretch ourselves when we read the gospel.

When we hear the phrase, Blessed are you,” it can sound rather patronizing.

It appears Jesus is glossing over all sorts of difficult human realities--with,

“Well done, keep it up, be happy and we will fix it all up in heaven.”

Reading the beatitudes in this light is a direct contradiction of what Jesus is saying,  
and certainly how he lived his own teachings.

The Hebrew concept of blessing isn't about divine pats on bowed human heads;

it is about discovering that God is present and active in one's life, right here and right now.

Let's take the first beatitude. The poor were the economically impoverished and marginalized.

They were reduced to begging

and are totally dependent on the generosity of others for sustenance.

While anyone can suffer an economic setback,

the existence of a social class of poor is evidence the community, as a whole,  
has not taken seriously its responsibility to care for the needy.

When this happens, God always sides with the poor, and acts as their protector.

The first beatitude announces that these poor, unfairly deprived now,  
will enjoy the reign of God.

Conversely, the rich, who did not address the needs of the poor,

will not enjoy the consolation of the reign of God. They have had their solace now.

The same with those who are hungry now, those who mourn...and so on.

Jesus tells us that when we see the poor, the hungry, the mournful...we had better get off our butts—  
because it is only when we try and rectify the situation, will we be blessed.

If we merely allow the status quo to continue...

the poor being poor, the hungry being hungry...

well we should be surprised when the roles get reversed.

The “Woes” are not to be seen as, “To bad for you, I hope you like hot weather.”

They are warnings, and are as important as the beatitudes.

Luke reminds us that every blessing carries with it a call,

every gift contains a duty to share, and every right--houses within it a responsibility.

This is particularity true of our nation, where the vast majority of our citizens are housed,  
educated, have clean drinking water, enjoy a long life span, and a stable democracy.

In all these blessing, you would think it should be easy to discover God's presence...  
but it doesn't work that way.

We must also face up to the responsibilities that those blessings give us.

It is not good enough to simply be appalled at the widening gap between the rich and poor,  
in our country, and around the world.

The gospel places a challenge at our feet--do something about it.

The blessings and woes, the beatitudes and warnings, call us to be so transparent,  
that when others see us, they see the presence of Christ.

This is why I said a few weeks ago, "If you Catholic every got together, you would be dangerous."

We are so busy fighting with one another,  
that all people see is a bunch of bickering kids on the school ground.  
This is not a blessing...it is a woe!

You see the devil is very subtle. He never comes at us in a red suit, with horns and a pitch fork.

He always comes looking attractive and seductive.

Good people are not tempted by evil.

Good people are tempted by evil disguised as good.

Sports, TV, computers or the internet are not evil in themselves.

However, if we use sports, or TV, as an escape from our duties as husband and father,  
then yes it is evil.

If we allow computers and the internet to distract us from the relationships

that we have with people around us, then yes I would consider it an evil.

If we allow our possessions to distract us from those who are in need—that is an evil.

I would also say that COVID, the trucker protests, the international synod...these are not evils.

They can be sources of blessing, but they can also be a source of division.

Whatever prevents us from allowing the Word of God to take root in our lives, is evil.

We are always called to plant ourselves close to the Lord by doing good  
and listening to the guidance of the Spirit.

Living as a blessing, is synonymous with living in the way we were created.

We believe that the world and everything in it  
was created in an orderly fashion by a good God.

We also believe that all things within that world unfold  
according to the order God set in the beginning.

Part of this order is seen in the relationship between certain actions and their consequences.

The challenge of life is to discover this order and live according to it.

To live according to this order is a blessing.

However, woe to you if you do not live according to this order.

This teaching is seen in the first reading.

A wise person, symbolic of a tree growing near a stream,  
where it can get all the nourishment it needs—from God—produces much fruit.

A foolish man symbolic of a shrub growing out in the wilderness,  
growing where God is not able to nourish it, is barely making it.

In the confessional I often tell people,

"You would think it should be easy to love the people around us,  
but they are the ones we hurt the most.

In the gospel Jesus looked up at his disciples.

When I read, "looked up at his disciples,

“I think of how he looked at Peter just after Peter had just denied him three time.”

There was no anger, no malice, Jesus looked at Peter with love in his heart.

It was Peter who could not handle this pure unadulterated love.

We are people of the resurrection.

We do not need to wait for heaven to rejoice and leap for joy.

We can do that here and now.

We need only to look around us and see the blessing that surround us.

We need only to look around us and see the grace of God working everywhere.

There is a story about an old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life:

“A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy.

“It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves.

One is evil—he is anger, envy, greed, arrogance, lies, false pride, and ego.”

The old man continued,

“The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, and truth.

The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather:

“Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Let us, like the tree growing by the water in the first reading,

feed only on the goodness of God.

And if we do we will bear much fruit.