



Christ in Our Neighborhood

January 29, 2023

Prayer

Lord, our God,
When your Son began to teach, He called us blessed. May we recognize our blessedness as grace-filled members of your Church. Help us to live out our blessedness through acts of love and mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Over the next five weeks, we will reflect on the Sermon on the Mount. Hopefully, this five week reflection will prepare us for the even longer spiritual Lenten journey during February through April.

In order to properly address the words of Jesus in His famous "Sermon," the Church invites us to consider the words of Zephaniah.

If Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is to be compared to Moses' Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, then our 1st Reading reminds us that the purpose of the Law is to live in right relationship with our God and with God's people.

If we are to observe the Law, we are to seek justice and humility. In other words, we are to live according to the spirit of the Law and not simply by its letter.

Questions

Why are we to live according to the Law of God?

How do the Commandments assist you in your own journey with the Lord?

Commentary

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

We must all remember that we are created by God. We did not create God and we did not create ourselves. Thus, as we read in our First Reading, we must "seek humility."

St. Paul reminds us that when we were called, we were not born wise. We were made wise through the wisdom of Christ. All of this is to say that we are not in charge of the world, the Church, or even the Gospel.

This is not to say that we are simply bystanders while Jesus alone accomplishes the mission of the Church. In fact, He relies on us to be His hands, His feet, His ears, and His lips to carry the Gospel to the

world. However, He is the Head and we are the members of the Body of Christ. We follow His lead. Or, as St. Paul reminds us, if we are to boast at all in the progress of the mission of the Gospel, we "should boast in the Lord."

Questions

Are you a person who gives credit where credit is due?

If someone compliments you, do you give praise to God?

Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix offers this five-part series on Sermon on the Mount.

Over these five weeks, you are invited to rediscover Jesus' powerful words found in the Gospel of Matthew.

For more on this five part series, visit dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

After Jesus had gathered His disciples, He began to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God (Mt 4). He then led the disciples upon the mountain and there He began to teach them.

Scholars show the direct comparison of Moses (the law giver) to Jesus (the fulfillment of the law)). On the mountain, Jesus will go to the heart of the Law.

The Law was not meant to be a least common denominator in order to be in God's graces or to achieve heaven. It was meant to keep us in a right and loving relationship with God and with our neighbor.

Rather than completing a ten-part (Ten Commandment) pass or fail test, Jesus presses us with the Beatitudes to get to the heart and spirit of the Law.

Jesus' Beatitudes offer us rewards (blessings) for "good behavior," rather than the "thou-shalt-nots" written on Moses' tablets. However, in no way does Jesus intend to dismiss the commandments. Rather, He fulfills them by His words and deeds.

Question

Which of the Beatitudes is your favorite? Why?

This Week's Task

This weekend is the beginning of Catholic School's week. As we reflect on Jesus' teaching on the mountain, consider praying for our Catholic School students and their teachers. Offer a prayer for our students and faculty in our schools as well as in our parishes' Religious Education programs.

Also, if you have the means to financially assist a student for Catholic school, consider making a gift to dphx.org/catholic-schools-365

Group Prayer

The group sings or says the following:

Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see your face
Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see

Open my ears, Lord
Help me to hear your voice
Open my ears, Lord
Help me to hear

Open my heart, Lord
Help me to love like you
Open my heart, Lord
Help me to love

Continue with Psalm 146

Psalm

Response: Blessed 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 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 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.

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

Conclude with an Our Father