

# Read

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

## LIVING THE WORD

### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 17, 2019



#### REFLECTION

Jesus gives a pep talk to the disciples. He offers them a choice much like a coach does with a basketball team when down by a few points with only a few seconds left to play. Either you jump off the bench and get the job done by believing in the abilities of your teammates and playing your best ever, or you accept defeat and make excuses for your downfall. Jesus is clear in Luke's account of the Gospel. There are two options for how to live life. Go the Beatitudes route by serving those who are hungry, weeping, or lonely and you will be rewarded in heaven. Or choose social values which are based on immediate satisfaction and a sense of apathy toward those in need. Choose a blessed life or one of self-indulgence. The temptations toward the latter choice are great; however the reward for choosing a Beatitude life will certainly bring intangible gifts that will remain with you forever.



#### ACTION

Much like an athlete would study the plays their coach wants them to execute in a game, study each Beatitude this week. Look at one Beatitude each day of this week. Consider how it is that you are living out that teaching in your community, your family, or with those you do not know. Do not forget to consider each "woe" as well.

- ✓ Which of these societal values tempts you the most?
- ✓ What can you do to combat these areas of your life Jesus warns us to avoid?

Take some time this week to journal about these teachings. This way you will be prepared when our Lord, the greatest coach of all, needs you to get off the bench and respond to a communal need.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What woes tempt you the most?
- ❖ How might you live out the Beatitudes more fully this week?



February 17, 2019

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #78C

Jeremiah 17:5-8

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1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Luke's Sermon on the Plain is often cited as a synoptic counterpart to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. Writing for his Gentile readers, Luke extends Jesus' congregation to include those coming from beyond traditionally Jewish regions. Christ's focus is on the blessings and woes that made up the actual social conditions of those assembled. Timeless in nature, the sermon affords an opportunity to help teens understand the Church's preferential option for the poor.

**Q FOCUS:** *Count your blessings even amidst life's trials.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

With President's Day celebrated on February 18, this Sunday's Gospel from Luke, chapter 6, affords us the opportunity to make a connection between faithful citizenship and a Christian's calling to come to the aid of those in need in our communities. The Memorial of St. Peter Damian (February 21) underscores the legacy of one who fully committed himself to prayer. The Feast of the Chair of St. Peter (February 22), harkening back to the earliest era of Christianity and commemorating St. Peter's earliest service in Rome, is a moment to pray for our Holy Father.

### Church Teaching Connection

"For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor 'his first mercy.' This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have 'this mind . . . which was in Jesus Christ' (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a 'special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness'" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 198).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Luke 6:17, 20-26

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

After a period of intense scrutiny, Jesus went to a mountain with his disciples to pray. The Twelve closest to Jesus then joined him as he prepared to teach a large crowd. Luke tells us that many came that day—not only Jews from Judea and Jerusalem who had been following Jesus, but also Gentiles from the coastal regions of Tyre and Sidon. We can imagine the crowd as they stood with the Twelve in anxious anticipation, waiting to hear what Jesus would say.

► Jesus prayed before he taught the crowd. How does prayer help you before an important event in your life?

Many different kinds of people from a variety of faith backgrounds were assembled that day on the plain.

► Have you ever had a friend from a different religious congregation, or one who has never really been to any church? How does it feel for you to share your faith with them?

Jesus began to teach his disciples and the crowd, using a series of unexpected phrases and directing them to “you”—those assembled before him:

- ✧ The poor will have the Kingdom of God.
- ✧ The hungry will be fully satisfied.
- ✧ Those who weep now will find laughter.
- ✧ Those who are hated and excluded will rejoice and find a wonderful reward in heaven!

Surely the crowd must have been surprised.

► How could the very things that made life so challenging for them possibly be called “blessings” by Jesus?

► How would you feel to hear that the things that cause you the most stress, anxiety, or heartache should be considered “blessings”?

Although Jesus proclaimed this sermon many years ago, we often still struggle with these same trials.

► Does it help you to know that a special blessing awaits you when you feel excluded, insulted, or even hated?

► How does Jesus’ encouragement to those who are hungry or sorrowing challenge you to be his hands and feet to our brothers and sisters who are most in need of compassion, protection, shelter, and nutrition?

After providing consolation for those who were struggling, Jesus next had some words of correction for those who probably felt they were comfortable and well off. He predicted “woe” or a time of pain:

- ✧ The rich already know comfort, they should expect to go without.
- ✧ Those who have enough food will go hungry.
- ✧ Those who laugh will weep and grieve.
- ✧ Those who are admired and popular will understand what it means to be hated.

If we are paying attention, there is much in this particular sermon from Jesus that leaves us feeling uncomfortable.

► Does this Gospel mean that God desires that you and I suffer?

Not necessarily. But Jesus' words in this particular Gospel are an attention-grabbing reminder that simply because we have all we need in this world, we are not exempt from helping those most in need. God does not intend that we should go without food, but perhaps we are called to consume more modestly so that we might share our bounty with the homeless or those who are in financially challenging situations. God does not mean that we should walk around crying constantly; we are reminded to have hearts that seek to console and comfort our friends when they experience sadness or strife. And God does not mean that we should not try to have friends or be loved, but instead we are reminded to seek out those who are on the margins and who feel lonely or unlovable. One major blessing of our faith is Christ's invitation to be a part of serving those most in need.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 140.*

**How are we called to share our faith with people from other religions respectfully?**

**How are we called to be Jesus' hands and feet to those most in need?**

**How might we be called to change our lives to act in greater solidarity with the poor in our parish and community?**

## Act on the Word

### Being the Blessings

*For this activity, you will need several highlighted copies of this Gospel passage. On each copy, highlight one of the "blessed" or "woe" phrases. Select multiple teens to proclaim the Word, having one narrator read Luke 6:17 and several teens to proclaim the remaining verses.*

Assemble your large group and have the teen readers prayerfully proclaim the Gospel. Next, divide your teens into eight groups. Have the readers who proclaimed each of the "blessed" or "woe" statements serve as a captain for their group. The groups should assemble with their phrase from the Gospel

to have a conversation about what it means. Groups should be encouraged to discuss how the phrase is relevant in today's world. Invite them to then turn their discussion toward specific "action items" where they themselves could be a blessing to someone in need. For example, for "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours," teens might strategize on ways to serve the poor (economically disadvantaged) or poor in spirit (homebound, elderly, and so on) in your parish and community. Encourage teens to think of concrete solutions that could enhance life for those suffering, and help them grow in their own faith and their relationship with Jesus.

After a period of small group discussion, reassemble your teens into your large group. Invite each group to share their findings with the larger group, focusing on specific action plans that your ministry might undertake together to serve your parish and community. Challenge your teens to see that, in many cases, the answers to being a blessing to others are not strictly financial, but may more often be related to attitudinal shifts or behavioral changes. Use this session as an opportunity to anticipate the season of Lent, which will be coming in just a few weeks (Ash Wednesday is March 6). As a large group, brainstorm potential acts of communal prayer, fasting, and almsgiving which will enable your teens both to be a blessing to others and also to adopt the Church's preferential option for the poor more richly into their own daily lives.

## Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,  
your blessings make saints of the poor, the weary,  
and the wounded.*

*Open our hearts and fill us with love;  
show us the way to your Kingdom,  
where you live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*