

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 13, 2022



REFLECTION

Which “blessed” statements do you identify with? What about the “woe” ones? It can be easy to focus just on the ways we are blessed. Who doesn’t want to hear that our reward will be great in heaven? But it’s important to also sit with the discomfort of the woe statements and take seriously their consequences.

For instance, when I hear Jesus say, “Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry” (Luke 6:25), I reflect on my relationship with and access to food. I have never had to worry about where my next meal is coming from. Am I doing all I can to ensure others have their basic needs met, too? I also reflect on the times where I have wasted food, the times I dumped half a plate of perfectly good pasta into the trash because I craved pizza instead.

Jesus does not want anyone to go hungry. The “woe” comes when we have considerably more than we need and are not willing to share. As Christians, we are always responsible for the needs of more than just ourselves. We are to care for all our sisters and brothers. This selfless love is what leads to a blessed life.



ACTION

Add your own blessed and woe statements to Jesus’ list. Who else do you think is blessed in Jesus’ eyes along with the poor, hungry, weeping, and excluded? And who might Jesus say woe to today in addition to the rich and filled, those who laugh and get what they want?



#blessed is often overused on social media and doesn’t always match up with Jesus’ understanding of “blessed.”
This week, post about things you or others have been truly blessed with by God.



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How will you respond to Jesus’ challenge in today’s Gospel?
- ❖ In what ways can you change the woes of your life into blessing?



February 13, 2022

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #78C

Jeremiah 17:5-8

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

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

Today's Gospel recounts Luke's version of the Beatitudes. An interesting difference between Luke and Matthew that will be discussed in the reflection is the fact that while Matthew only focuses on blessings, Luke includes the "woes": describing behaviors that will result in loss of blessings. In this way, Luke is being a little more direct with his audience in asking them to turn away from negative behaviors. The Beatitudes are not just promises, but also predictions, rooted in a realistic understanding of the fact that all conditions must eventually change. In preparation for those changes, we must seek to invest our blessings in meaningful connections and relationships with those around us.

Q FOCUS: *We are called to share our blessings with others.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On February 14, the Church celebrates Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who were born in Greece in the ninth century and were brothers. They were scholarly and holy men who were sent to share the Good News with the Slavic people. They did this by developing an alphabet that would support the Old Slavonic oral language tradition. They were able to translate Scriptures and help spread the Christian faith among many nations.

Church Teaching Connection

The Church offers a variety of blessings that lay people and the ordained can confer. It is important to remember that these blessings always come from God, never from a person. In our prayers, we ask for God's blessing on particular activities and events. We give God thanks and praise for his presence in our lives. We are reminded of this in the introduction to the *Book of Blessings*—the official ritual book that includes a variety of blessings for families, parishes, and the community (see *Book of Blessings*, 1 and 6).

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:

Today's reading might sound familiar—a version of this teaching appears in both Luke and Matthew. Jesus preaches about blessings and those who receive them. We refer to these “blessed are those” statements as the Beatitudes. (This term comes from the Latin word meaning “blessed.”)

Jesus instructs the people as to who shall receive blessings and who shall not. In a certain way, these statements could be taken as obvious. For example, those who are weeping will laugh; those who are laughing will mourn. A simple understanding of these statements would say that yes, we never go through our whole lives in grief. For those experiencing sorrow, there will eventually come a time when consolation comes, our hearts heal from grief, though never completely.

Jesus shares these teachings with us to invite us to something deeper. One way to understand these teachings is by considering the relationships that these statements imply. If we allow ourselves to look at the world and see the suffering of others and be moved by it; if we weep with and for others, then we create deep connections with those around. These connections can console and support us in our times of need. But if we live our lives only searching for the immediate pleasures (riches, satisfaction, merriment,

status), then what will we be left with when these things pass away? When we only care about finding happiness to the point that we turn a blind eye to the rest of the world and those who suffer, we are not living in community with all the people of God. We have no connection to what is real and true in our lives and in our faith.

► Who supports you in times of joy and sorrow?

One difference between Matthew's and Luke's retellings of these teachings is Luke's inclusion of the “woe to you” statements. Whereas in Matthew all of the statements are positive and have a more spiritual meaning, Luke includes some warnings about situations to be wary of. We have to read this with some understanding of the people Luke was writing this Gospel account for—in those communities, there were probably issues of economic and social disparity. Perhaps the rich did not share with the poor and those who were well-off separated themselves from those who struggled. This was part of Luke's message, that Christ calls us all to live together, and to share in joys and sorrows of daily life with one another.

This message overall connects us to the idea of solidarity, of sharing our lives with one another. It does not mean that we share everything equally, but it does mean that when we have blessings in our lives, we have a duty to bring blessings to others. That is a nuance in Luke's statements of woe. He is describing warnings for people who wish to keep their blessings all to themselves.

► What kind of blessings do you have in your life? How could you bring blessings to the lives of others?

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 128.

Those who suffer in their earthly life shall be blest in heaven.

The Beatitudes are not just promises of heavenly peace; they are also predictions of reality.

Luke's version of this sermon includes warnings about what to avoid in addition to what to strive for.

Act on the Word

New Beatitudes

For this activity, you will need a large writing surface that everyone can see (a blackboard/whiteboard, or a large paper on an easel, etc.) and appropriate materials to write on that surface. You should also have paper and pens available for teens to use in their own reflection on today's topic.

This activity will help the young people think about the Beatitudes in the context of their own lives and will help them identify “new Beatitudes” for our modern society. Take whatever surface you are using for community writing and divide it into two halves: label one half “Blessings” and the other half “Woes.” Then give the teens paper and pens and invite them to reflect on their lives or the world. Ask them to jot down ideas of modern versions of these statements that they believe are true. Although you don't want to get bogged down in arguments, encourage them to be honest even if their statements might stretch into “political” or controversial territory. Give them several minutes to think and write, and then call the group back together.

Ask for volunteers to come up and write their statements on the proper half of the board. Ask each person to explain or defend their statement and invite the group to comment upon it, either agreeing

or expanding it or gently challenge these statements. Remember that all of the statements should be grounded in what we know to be true about God and his love, mercy, and justice.

If there is time remaining, ask the young people to look at the Beatitudes from today's Gospel and see if they think the statements still hold true today, or if any no longer apply or need revision.

Closing Prayer

*Loving God,
we crave for your hand
to lead us to our heavenly home.
May we know that our present life is only
a glimpse
of the beautiful reality that awaits us
with our ancestors in faith.
Through Christ our Lord.
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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.