



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great...” Luke 6:24

While Matthew proclaims the Sermon on the Mount, Luke casts very similar material as a Sermon on the Plain. Like Matthew, Luke begins with beatitudes. Unlike Matthew, Luke has only four beatitudes. Where Matthew speaks of the *"poor in spirit,"* Luke just says *"poor."* Where Matthew speaks of those who *"hunger for righteousness,"* Luke just says *"hunger."*

Luke and Matthew each address radically different communities. While Matthew's community is the Jewish "middle class," Luke serves the poor Gentiles. While Matthew rightly exhorts *"the poor in spirit"* to a "middle class" who are not literally hungry, Luke addresses the poor literally in need of food and shelter.

In calling out to God to bless the poor, it is important to translate the word *"bless"* to *"remember,"* i.e. *"remember the poor."* For God to remember is for God to bestow all blessings, graces and gifts. For Matthew's community it is not poverty itself that is blessed but rather the people with an impoverished spirit. But for Luke, the poor know they depend on God. It is not hunger that is remembered by God but the *people* that are hungry, both physically and spiritually. This invocation pours down the River of Life onto the people who then seek God, which in turn strengthens their community.

Jesus proclaims that this is an acceptable time to rejoice and *"leap for joy for surely your reward is great."* He is reminding us that our fidelity in these situations will be rewarded in heaven. This does not need to mean life after death. Heaven is the profound indwelling of God here and now. As our rejection of the outer world grows, the communion with God grows more intensely to overcome persecution. Our consolation is the indwelling of a life of grace. As we grow in this *"Christocentric"* reality, heaven is here and now.

Reflect on the contrasts in this gospel. Each of the beatitudes is incarnated in the *remembering.* Reflect on the wisdom of Christ's teaching in the consoling and joyful grace of the beatitudes.

As we reject the outer world, our communion with God grows more intensely. The early Christians discovered this as they opted for God's mystical world, where the outflow of interior grace infused a life-sustaining community with Christ at its center. Choose to animate Christ in this life where *we live and move and have our being in him (Acts 17:28)* in a life where peace prevails through the abiding love of God, self and neighbor.

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A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

Then Jesus looked up at his disciples and said:

*"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you
on account of the Son of Man.
Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,
for surely your reward is great in heaven;
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets."*

*"But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets."*

The Gospel of the Lord