

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

February 13, 2022 C

**Facilitator:** *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the word He wants us to hear this week.*

**Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.**

**Opening prayer:** *Lord, in your Word today, you say to us, “Blessed are those who meditate upon your Word and place their trust in you.” Bless us now, Lord, as we gather together to meditate upon your word and help us to always place our trust in you and not in the things of this world. Amen.*

**Response to last week’s word:** [Facilitator briefly recalls last week’s Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** The first reading *contrasts* the wicked who place their trust in people, with the righteous who place their trust in God. The gospel is Luke’s Sermon on the Plain which also speaks about trust in God. The second reading emphasizes the centrality of the resurrection in the Christian life.

*Let us listen to God’s word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.*

Read the First Reading, the Psalm and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 17:5-8

Jeremiah conducts his ministry during a time when Israel’s leaders shift their trust in God and place it in the leaders of pagan nations. Today’s verses from Jeremiah are directed toward Israel’s leaders and all who place their trust not in God but in people. Those who place their whole trust in people are compared to a “barren bush in the desert.” The wise or righteous who place their trust in God are compared to a tree planted by the waterside. Such people are secure and productive because they are rooted in God.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM 1

This psalm is a clear echo of the first reading. There is a contrast between the good and wicked, between human and divine counsel. What matters, most of all, is a God-centered life which ultimately will not disappoint.

### SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

It seems that some of the Christians in Corinth raise some questions about the resurrection. In response, Paul reasserts the central importance of the resurrection to the Christian life. Without it, all else crumbles. If there is no resurrection, there is no victory over sin and death, and our faith is in vain.

### PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: Luke 6:17, 20-26

*As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.*

**A participant reads the Gospel,  
then all pause to reflect.**

*As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.*

### GOSPEL: Luke 6:17, 20-26

This weekend and next weekend, we will listen to excerpts from what may be the most challenging verses in Luke’s gospel, his “Sermon on the Plain.”

Jesus takes the accepted beliefs of his day and stands them on their heads. He names four groups of people who would have been regarded as very blest, and states that they are anything but blest. And he takes four groups who would have been regarded as cursed and pronounced them blest. Jesus is speaking to a situation

in which the economically poor are reduced to begging—they are marginalized. The rich and better-off members of the community fail in their covenant with God by not coming to the rescue of the poor. When this happens, God sides with the poor and speaks on their behalf. Let's now look briefly at each of the four sets of blessings and woes.

*Blessed are the poor... and woe to the rich.*

The poor are not blest because they are materially destitute; rather, they are blest because they are able to place their trust in God in the midst of poverty. They are blest because God is on their side. The rich are not cursed simply because they are materially well off, but because of their failure to come to the rescue of the poor by generously sharing their blessings with them. They are having their reward *now* but they will lose out big time in the reign of God.

*Blessed are the hungry... woe to the full.*

Jesus is not saying it's a blessing to be starving and a curse to have a good meal. He is saying we are blessed if we can keep trusting in God in empty/hungry times. It is also a blessing if we are hungry for God. It is a curse if our "plenty" times lead us to ignore God. It is a curse to be spiritually self-satisfied.

*Blessed are you if weeping... woe if laughing.*

It is a blessing if we mourn for our sins and for the injustices in our world and for the losses we experience in life. It is not a curse to be happy, but it is a curse if our laughter is a cover-up for our sadness or if it is at the expense of others. Some become rich at the expense of others.

*Blessed are you if people hate you... woe if people speak well of you.*

We are blessed if people reject us because of our love for Jesus. On the other hand, it is a curse to be spoken well of in a world that rejects Jesus.

Poverty, hunger, tears and rejection are *not* to be sought after. But if they come to us as a result of our following Jesus, then they are blessings. God can turn poverty, hunger, tears and rejection into blessings. We see this when people in bad times turn to God and convert to his ways. On the other hand, a good financial portfolio could lead to our spiritual demise. In Jesus' sermon on the plain, he is saying that a key

part of living in his kingdom invokes standing with the poor, the hungry, the grieving, the persecuted and the marginalized. Finally, the beatitudes only make sense to one who has fully embraced the ways of Jesus. To the rest, they are nonsense.

## **FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. What verse in today's readings makes you feel most uncomfortable? What verse challenges you the most?
3. What would you name as blessings and curses in your life?
4. What are the things you hunger for the most? What is the deepest desire of your heart?
5. The sin of Pride is glaringly evident in today's gospel. How are you challenged to be more humble?
6. What is the one thing Jesus is saying to us in this Sunday's Gospel about how a disciple should speak or act?

**JOURNALING:** *Having listened to God's word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

## **PRAYING WITH THE WORD**

Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestions: "Dear Lord, I trust in you, yet I am still disappointed or dumbfounded when I fail others or others fail me – please give me a heart to love like you in betrayal." "Please help me to change my perception of 'blessed' for both myself and others to Jesus' perception."

## **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestions: Spend some time meditating on where you tend to place your security. While we would all like to say, "My trust is in God alone," how true is that in your life?

**CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF  
THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND  
INTERCESSION.**

**FACILITATOR:** What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we wish to pray? Suggestion: Pray for all who feel “less than” that they may know their stature as a child of God.

**CLOSING PRAYER (together)**

*Ever-loving God, you promise to be with us at all times and in all places. In times of blessing, help us give thanks by sharing that blessing with others. In times of woe, help us remember to turn to you, refresh the waters of Baptism in which we are planted, and live with Resurrection hope. Amen*