



a Kendall Hunt Company

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

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

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word In Liturgy

The prophet Jeremiah preached at a point of great moral decay in the Jewish people's history, warning them of impending disaster if they did not repent of their sins and renew their fidelity to the covenant with Yahweh. Of particular concern to Jeremiah was the manner in which the kings of Israel were making alliances with various pagan nations. In Jeremiah's eyes, seeking security through reliance on the military might of their neighbors was tantamount to placing faith in the pagan gods of those nations. Today's reading reflects a rhetorical style typical of wisdom sayings, in which blessings and curses are juxtaposed to emphasize the only viable path to true happiness: reliance on God alone. The lush imagery associated with a desert oasis, contrasted with the stark picture of a "lava waste, a salt and empty earth," would have evoked powerful associations in the mind of Jeremiah's contemporaries.

The lectionary invites us to reflect on Luke's Sermon on the Plain for the next three weeks. Equivalent to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Luke's version of the "beatitudes" contains many unique elements, which reveal his theological vision. Luke is more direct and immediate than Matthew--no mention of "poor in spirit" here; it is the poor who are blessed. No hungering for righteousness; it is those who are hungry who will be filled. Notable also are the reversals that are promised: those undergoing trials now will be blessed later. The addition of corresponding woes further highlights the notion of a future of blessedness, which awaits Jesus' disciples. In Luke, the sermon is preached to the disciples, thus placing added emphasis on Luke's concern with the theme of discipleship, its requirements and its rewards. For the Christian community of Luke, already struggling for survival in the era of persecutions, these words of reassurance were critical. Not only would their ultimate fate

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involve a reversal of fortunes; they would enjoy a blessedness that more than compensated for their present sufferings. We who hear the word today are likewise reminded of our vocation to beatitude.

Catholic Doctrine

Our Vocation to Beatitude

We all want to live happily. That desire originates with God who places it within our hearts. Throughout life we pursue happiness, a pursuit that God alone will satisfy. We believe that the desire for happiness has been placed within us in order to draw us to the Source that will fulfill it.

The scriptural beatitudes recorded in the gospel (this Sunday's text and Matthew 5:3-12) constitute the heart of Jesus' preaching and they give further shape to the promises made by God to the chosen people since the time of Abraham. Indeed, the beatitudes enunciated by Jesus fulfill those promises by locating them no longer in a territory but in the realm of the kingdom of heaven.

Thus, the promise of the good news of Jesus Christ is that people can and will share in the life of God. By human knowing and loving it is possible to attain a full share in the intimate communion of knowing and loving between Father, Son and Holy Spirit which constitutes the life of the Trinity. Attaining this full share in the life of the Trinity is not possible without assistance from God.

The beatitudes reveal the ultimate goal of the human person and of our acts: to enter into the full communion of the love of God. This vocation is offered by God to each individual and to the Church as a whole.

The promise of beatitude confronts believers with decisive moral choices and teaches us that true human happiness is not found in worldly wealth, comfort, power, science, and art, however good these realities may be. In God alone, the source of every good thing and of all love, our true human happiness and joy is found.