

## **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Lectionary: 78**

### **Reading I - [Jeremiah 17:5-8](#)**

Thus says the LORD: Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava waste, a salt and empty earth. Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.

**Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 & 6](#) R (40:5a) Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**

### **Reading II - [1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20](#)**

Brothers and sisters: If Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

### **Gospel - [Luke 6:17, 20-26](#)**

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."

## Life without God is life without supernatural hope:

Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness. #45 CCC

It's true to say that *"neither ancient programs of perfectibility, nor Renaissance humanism, nor modern progressivism, nor Marxism, nor the contemporary valorization of freedom have come close to holding up the human person as high as do the Scriptures. For the biblical authors' claim is that the human being is marked, in every aspect of his existence, by a likeness unto God, that he has been endowed with a distinctive mission from God, and that he is ultimately destined for life on high in union with God."*<sup>1</sup> So, it's understandable that we are drawn to and inspired by others and desire to give them our complete trust or even believe we can trust ourselves completely. However, God did not intend for the creature to ever replace the creator. In fact, since the original downfall and corruption of humanity the issue of 'in whom or what' we place our total confidence has become critical to our survival in this world as well as our hope to ever live in the next. A life without God is ultimately a life without supernatural hope.

*"Genuine Christian life is [to be] an imitation of the Trinity. Just as there is one God in three Persons, so, in Christ, we are all "members one of another"; there is, and we are called to become, a single Man in a multitude of persons."*<sup>2</sup> Today's readings remind us of this truth. A relationship with God is not optional if we are serious about living an authentically human life. The beatific vision which we are promised to experience in the next life, confronts us with decisive moral choices during our mortal lives. It invites us to allow the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts so as to seek the love and company of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement - however beneficial it may be - but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love... #1723 CCC

Although complete trust in God doesn't mean we will be free from difficulties and physical death, it does mean that we can be free from sin and all distress. We will have a new source of life that enables us to face adversity, no matter its form or intensity. As Jeremiah says in the first reading, those who put their full confidence in human beings and the passing things of this world, we will increasingly lack integrity and contribute to building a world that is hostile to authentic human flourishing.

In today's Second Reading Paul teaches us that the authentically human life is a life lived in Christ and made possible by Jesus through whom we are redeemed and by whom we are transformed and given supernatural hope. Authentically human life lived with a disposition of humble gratitude to the Father, in the divine life made possible by Christ, and guided by the Holy Spirit is like the well-placed plant in today's first reading. To live in opposition to or denial of this truth of who and what we are as human beings is to live in opposition to the will and power of God. For those who come to Jesus looking for a garden of peace and life of ease, where every day is a 10 on the 'smiley face happiness scale, Easter Sunday joy without Good Friday sorrow as it were, St. Paul says the authentic human life cannot be known and lived without first turning to God for redemption, since, if Christ is not raised from the dead, "your faith in Christ is useless", "will gain you nothing," because we would continue to be dominated by sin."<sup>3</sup>

In today's Gospel Luke speaks of the joy and the consequences of not only living in accord with our nature. He reminds us that the disciple of Christ who draws from hope in the promises he makes in the Beatitudes, draws from something undiminished by poverty, hunger, sorrow, or persecution. He knows that there are bad seasons and good ones in life, but a good harvest will ultimately come. As the psalmist says; R

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Barron, [Renewing Our Hope: Essays for the New Evangelization](#) (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 193.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Norris, [The Trinity: Life of God, Hope for Humanity: Towards a Theology of Communion](#) (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2009), 53.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ellingworth, Howard Hatton, and Paul Ellingworth, [A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 342.

(40:5a) **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.** Blessed the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent, but delights in the law of the LORD and meditates on his law day and night. He is like a tree planted near running water, that yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves never fade.

But as some of us know and the lives of the saints affirm, it's not enough to know what God wants for us we also need the grace necessary for the authentically human life. Grace such as that which comes from the Eucharist. Christ himself, truly present. When we receive him in Holy Communion, his being nourishes ours so that we are increasingly transformed and strengthened. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we are strengthened to desire and to live the authentically human life.

Do you have a crucifix in your home? One way to help keep this message before us, so that we can experience the blessedness Jesus wants to share with us, is to follow a long-standing Catholic tradition. It was a common practice in past generations but is less so now. The crucifix reminds us that Jesus, the perfect man, who led the perfect life, with perfect love until the end and painful sacrifice, he fulfilled his mission. This is one of the reasons every Catholic Church keeps a crucifix over the altar.

We are all called to holiness. There is no distinction of state-in-life, race or personal circumstances. This teaching on the universal call to holiness reaches back to our original innocence in the garden of creation, has been to focus of the lives of the saints, and has been at the forefront of Church teaching, preaching, and mission since the second Vatican council. As it says in one of the documents, “strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state—though each in his or her own way—are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect.” Lumen Gentium 11

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is not proposing an unattainable ideal, useful though that might be to make us feel humble in the light of our inability to reach it. No. Christian teaching in this regard is quite clear: what Christ commands, he commands in order to have us do what he says.

Therefore, every Christian is capable of living the moral teaching of Christ and of attaining the full height of our calling—holiness—not by our own efforts alone but by means of the grace which Christ has won for us, and with the abiding help of the means of sanctification which he left to his Church. *“If anyone plead human weakness to excuse himself for not loving God, it should be explained that He who demands our love pours into our hearts by the Holy Spirit the fervor of his love, and this good Spirit our heavenly Father gives to those that ask him. With reason, therefore, did St Augustine pray: ‘Give me what thou command, and command what you please.’ As, then, God is ever ready to help us, especially since the death of Christ our Lord, by which the prince of this world was cast out, there is no reason why anyone should be disheartened by the difficulty of the undertaking. To him who loves, nothing is difficult.”*<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> [Saint Luke's Gospel](#), The Navarre Bible (Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers, 2005), 76–77.