

4TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

The Ten Commandments mostly contain the “Thou shall nots”. Whereas today's gospel message presents a positive approach to a way of life that will lead us to the rewards of salvation, not in this world but in the next.

Zephaniah on the other hand prophesied mostly about the terrible Day of The Lord when the Lord will wreak vengeance upon idolaters and the unfaithful, of whom there were many amongst the Jews of his time. Today he also speaks of justice, humility, no wrong doing, mercy and peacemakers, an approach also reflected in the beatitudes.

In the beatitudes Jesus speaks of happiness of the poor in spirit, the gentle, the mourners and the righteous. The poor in spirit has nothing to do with poverty, but is a fundamental condition of becoming blessed and happy.

We are blessed when we do His will every day.
We are poor in spirit when we surrender our plans to God.
We are meek and gentle when we fight for justice by peaceful means and have compassion on those around us.

We are happy and pure in heart when we are morally pure, honest and sincere, people of integrity and good character.

We are peacemakers when we have positive attitudes towards reconciliation. Making peace involves diplomacy, self- control, and a willingness to forgive.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church summarized the importance of the Beatitudes as “The heart of Christ’s teaching” describing our relationship to the Kingdom in three ways.

First these simple promises address our highest desire:- happiness with God. For only God can satisfy the heart. Second they describe the path to God for us as individuals and together as Church. Through the Beatitudes, we share God’s very life because we enter into His kingdom. Number 3 they challenge us to live moral lives by putting God first. If we want to know what it really truly means to be a Christian, the beatitudes give us the answer.

Finally St Theresa of Calcutta and her sisters accepted the challenge of the beatitudes by caring for the poor of India and beyond.

If you google St Theresa’s sayings there is a list a mile long. I like this one:

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier, Be the living expression of God’s kindness.

Kindness in your face

Kindness in your eyes

Kindness in your smile”

The challenge for us is, are we going to be happy by following the worldly ways or by following the beatitudes ways.

If we choose the world's way we are seeking happiness in the wrong place. The way of Jesus is not the easy way, it requires toil and suffering by working with the poor, the sick and hungry. God wants us to live as brothers and sisters who care for one another.