

SCC REFLECTION: 6th Sunday Year C. Lk. Fr Donal McIlraith

The Sermon on the Plain



Text: Luke 6:17.20-26

[17] And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases.

...

[20] And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

[21] "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.

[22]"Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man!

[23] Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

[24] But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.

[25] "Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. "Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

[26] "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Reflection:

1. Jesus has just prayed on the mountain and chosen the twelve. Then he comes down and three groups are with him: the twelve ("them"), a wider group of disciples, people who are already following Jesus, and a great crowd from all over. Jesus speaks to everyone. Matthew has 9 beatitudes (on a mountain) Luke has 4 beatitudes and 4 woes/calamities.
2. We must look at the text carefully. Jesus spoke to all but he looked intently at the disciples. These beatitudes describe who Jesus is and who disciples must be also
3. Last week we saw "they left everything." Everything. Now they have only Jesus and must depend completely on him and on his Father for everything. This is the poverty of the gospels. This is the poverty we are talking of in the beatitudes, poverty, hunger, weeping, persecution. This is what can happen to a disciple just as we know these things happened to Jesus himself. All the poor disciple can say is, "Lord, have mercy." "Ask and you shall receive" Jesus tells us. We must now totally depend on Jesus for everything. This total desire for Jesus and for God's kingdom to come in us and in the world, is true poverty. It is true, of course, that God hears the cry of the poor. He fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty
4. Leaving everything, for the disciples, means belonging totally to Jesus and to God. Jesus is himself the kingdom and those who belong to him are also the kingdom. Now the poor disciple of Jesus has, indeed is, the kingdom of heaven.

Next week: Lk 6:27-38.

[27] "But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
[28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.
[29] To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.
[30] Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.
[31] And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.
[32] "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
[33] And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.
[34] And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.
[35] But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.
[36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.
[37] "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;
[38] give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."