

Bishop D. Manuel's Homily for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Brothers and sisters,

Today's readings lead us to a central principle of the Christian faith: the way God looks at the world is very different from how we look at the world. What the world considers weak, insignificant, or without value is precisely the place where God brings forth his salvation and makes himself present. God reveals his strength in weakness, in the heart of the poor, the humble, the simple, and the peaceful.

In the first reading, the prophet Zephaniah addresses a wounded people, small and humiliated by history. And he says something surprising: "Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land." God does not promise to rebuild the people with the strong, the powerful, or the proud, but with a humble and poor remnant, a people who trust in the name of the Lord. This "remnant" does not live by lies or violence, but by trust. Here begins God's logic. It is with the poor and the humble that God builds his Kingdom.

The Psalm echoes this same hope: the Lord does justice for the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry, frees captives, protects the stranger, upholds the orphan and the widow. He is not a distant God, but a God who takes sides — the side of the fragile, the forgotten, those who do not count.

Saint Paul, in the second reading, helps us understand that this is not just poetry or spiritual theory. He reminds the Christians of Corinth — and us as well — that most of us are not wise, nor powerful, nor influential in the eyes of the world. And this is not by chance. God chose what is weak to shame the strong, so that no one may boast except in the Lord. Our dignity does not come from what we have or what we appear to be, but from the fact that we belong to Christ.

It is in this context that we arrive at the Gospel. Jesus goes up the mountain and proclaims the Beatitudes. They are not just beautiful phrases to frame; they are the portrait of Jesus himself and the program of life for his disciples.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." This is not an exaltation of misery, but the recognition that those are blessed who do not rely on riches as their ultimate security, but on God.

“Blessed are the meek.” In an aggressive, competitive, and violent world, Jesus says that the true inheritance belongs to those who do not impose themselves by domination and force.

“Blessed are those who mourn.” God does not despise human pain; He enters into it and promises consolation.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Not the complacent, but the restless, those who do not accept injustice.

“Blessed are the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for the sake of righteousness.”

All this sounds strange, almost scandalous. Because Jesus does not call the winners blessed, but the faithful; not those who dominate, but those who love; not those who defend themselves at all costs, but those who trust in God.

The Beatitudes are not an easy promise, nor an escape from reality. They are a demanding but true path. They tell us that Christian happiness does not depend on a life without problems, but on a life lived in the way of Jesus.

Today, this Gospel places before us a simple and demanding question:

According to which logic am I living?

According to the logic of the world, which values success, power, and appearances?

Or according to the logic of the Kingdom, which begins in humility, mercy, and trust in God?

May this Sunday help us believe that the path of the Beatitudes is not naïveté, but wisdom; not weakness, but strength; not defeat, but fullness of life.

And may we, like that “humble remnant” announced by the prophets, be a people who trust in the Lord and find in Him our true joy.

On the mountain height, Lord, you point out paths of life

“Blessed...”

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A murmur of astonishment is heard...

“Blessed are the poor,
the meek, the peaceful, the merciful,
the pure of heart...

Cursed the proud, those who have no compassion...”

On the mountain height, Lord, you point out paths of life
in a word of love not yet fulfilled!

Your word speaks of the poor,
the persecuted,
the marginalized,
the meek and afflicted
as blessed!

But it is hard for us to believe
that it is on the path of the cross,
of forgiveness, of love,
in the poor and the oppressed
that we can find You, Lord!

And on the mountain height
your voice continues to be heard:

“Blessed are the poor,
the unjustly treated, the meek,
Blessed are all of you
persecuted because of my name...”

On the mountain height, Lord,
we hear your word and are left stunned...
In the end, blessed

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are not the rich with their millions,
the powerful who, on their golden thrones,
believe themselves masters of the earth,
commanders of military arsenals,
lords of violence and war...

Blessed are the poor,
those who give their lives for love,
these are truly happy
and your friends, Lord!

AMEN.