

JANUARY 29, 2017

# FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ZEPHANIAH 2:3; 3:12-13

PSALM 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31

MATTHEW 5:1-12A

## REFLECTION

How are we to live our lives in this world? What model is set forth for us to follow? Of course, we should be quite familiar with the Ten Commandments that Moses received on Mount Sinai. In today's Gospel reading, we hear Jesus begin the great Sermon on the Mount, which begins right at the beginning of the fifth chapter of Matthew's account of the Gospel. Jesus ascends a mountain to start teaching the masses of people who had gathered around him. And what we hear in today's reading sets the stage for the entire sermon and for how, ultimately, we should live our lives. Jesus preaches the Beatitudes to those who gather around him, enlightening them and us as to who are called "blessed." Blessed are the poor in spirit and those who mourn; the meek, those who hunger and thirst, and those who are merciful and clean of heart; the peacemakers are children of God while those who are insulted and are persecuted are granted heaven's reward. A familiar teaching, but do we truly understand what Jesus was getting at as he set forth his great teaching? Well, just taking the word "beatitude" tells us something . . . these are aspects of how we should "be-attitude." Some of these aspects of poverty listed in the Beatitudes can happen outside of our control (such as mourning and at times being poor in spirit). But some we can actually work toward, such as working for righteousness and being peacemakers.

"Know the poorest of the poor among your neighbors, in your neighborhoods, in your town, in your city, perhaps in your own family. When you know them, that will lead you to love them. And love will impel you to serve them. Only then will you begin to act like Jesus and live out the gospel. Place yourselves at the service of the poor. Open your hearts to love them. Be living witnesses of God's mercy. This may lead you to give up your own sons so that they may serve God, who gives preference to the poor."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lavonne Neff, ed. *A Life for God: The Mother Teresa Reader*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Charis Books, 1995; p. 217.

## ACTION

Get out and know those who are poor in the circles in which you live. Learn from them. Help them, as you are able. Gain further insight into what Jesus was preaching about in the Beatitudes by seeking out those who are living in various forms of poverty.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● Reread the passage from Matthew's account of the Beatitudes. Which of these speaks most directly to you? Why does this speak to you? Which of the Beatitudes seems most foreign to you? Why? Reflect further upon this one.