

# 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 16 FEBRUARY 2025



## COLLECT

O God, who teach us that you abide  
in hearts that are just and true,  
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace  
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Apart from his colourful parables, one of the best-known parts of Jesus' teaching will be the Beatitudes. Normally people would turn to Matthew's gospel (Mt 5:3-12) where Jesus the teacher is giving the Sermon on the Mount to the crowds who have gathered. The story in today's Gospel of Luke may be a bit less familiar. Jesus and the crowds are not on a hillside but on a piece of level ground. Jesus does not address the whole assembly but directs his remarks to the disciples. In Luke, there are just four beatitudes which are matched by four corresponding 'woes'.

Each of the gospels presents a unique picture of Jesus. This enriches our understanding of Christ and deepens our encounter with him.

## A reading from the prophet Jeremiah 17:5–8

The Lord says this:

'A curse on the man who puts his trust in man,  
who relies on things of flesh,  
whose heart turns from the Lord.  
He is like dry scrub in the wastelands:  
if good comes, he has no eyes for it,  
he settles in the parched places of the wilderness,  
a salt land, uninhabited.

'A blessing on the man who puts his trust in the Lord,  
with the Lord for his hope.

He is like a tree by the waterside  
that thrusts its roots to the stream:  
when the heat comes it feels no alarm,  
its foliage stays green;  
it has no worries in a year of drought,  
and never ceases to bear fruit.'

## Responsorial Psalm Ps 1:1–4

**R.** Happy are they who hope in the Lord.

Happy indeed is the man  
who follows not the counsel of the wicked;  
nor lingers in the way of sinners  
nor sits in the company of scorners,  
but whose delight is the law of the Lord  
and who ponders his law day and night. **R.**

He is like a tree that is planted  
beside the flowing waters,  
that yields its fruit in due season  
and whose leaves shall never fade;  
and all that he does shall prosper. **R.**

Not so are the wicked, not so!  
For they like winnowed chaff  
shall be driven away by the wind.  
For the Lord guards the way of the just  
but the way of the wicked leads to doom. **R.**

## First Reading

The 'curse' and 'blessing' from this text of Jeremiah correspond to the beatitudes and woes of Luke's gospel. The contrast is between the person who puts trust in human beings as against the one who places trust in the Lord. It is strongly drawn. Each is presented with striking nature imagery which will help to depict the message for the listeners. The reader's voice will convey the contrast: a firmer voice for the first stanza and a warmer tone for the second.

This passage and Psalm 1 which is used for today's response share the same material – the content and the imagery is the same. It is unclear which one is borrowing from the other.

Inclusive language is difficult here. The NRSV puts it into the plural; although this may not be the best solution, it is, at least, a translation which is available.

## Responsorial Psalm

Given the shared material between Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17, it is no surprise that this text is set as the response in today's Lectionary.

The 'law of the Lord' is not a whole collection of rules and regulations. When they ask Jesus what is the greatest commandment of the Law, he answers: Love God with all your heart... and your neighbour as yourself. The one who is happy in the psalm takes delight in this law of love.

As with the first reading, the tone and spirit should be varied by the cantor/reader in keeping with the imagery. The second stanza needs a joy and lightness which will be missing in the more sombre third stanza.

The stanzas are longer than usual and uneven: six lines in the first and then five lines in the second and third stanzas. The cadence at the end of each stanza should clearly cue the response for the people.

**A reading from the first letter of St Paul  
to the Corinthians 15:12, 16–20**

If Christ raised from the dead is what has been preached, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, you are still in your sins. And what is more serious, all who have died in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate of all people.

But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.

**A reading from the holy Gospel  
according to Luke 6:17, 20–26**

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases.

Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said:

'How happy are you who are poor;  
yours is the kingdom of God.

Happy you who are hungry now:  
you shall be satisfied.

Happy you who weep now:  
you shall laugh.

'Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

'But alas for you who are rich:  
you are having your consolation now.

Alas for you who have your fill now:  
you shall go hungry.

Alas for you who laugh now:  
you shall mourn and weep.

'Alas for you when the world speaks well of you!  
This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'

**Second Reading**

In these weeks before Lent, the second reading is taken from the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. It is devoted to the resurrection. Those who proclaim these texts should read the whole of 1 Cor 15 to put the selections into context.

It seems that some of the community in Corinth were questioning the possibility of our resurrection after death because they tended to discount the body and focus only on the spirit. Paul's argument goes back and forth: Christ is raised, so all are raised. If all are not raised, Christ is not raised... but in fact, Christ has been raised and this is our hope.

The Paschal Mystery is about transformation from death to life – for Christ and for all of us who are joined to Christ. If we only see what happens in this life, we see only the dying and not the emergence of new life. If death is the end, we perish. But Paul is teaching hope. Christ lives and will lead those who follow him to life.

The reader should treat the text decisively and with positive hope, despite the fact that the bulk of it is couched in quite negative terms.

**Gospel**

Happy are you... Alas for you...

The two sets of beatitudes and woes correspond exactly. They deal with the concrete realities of poverty, hunger, grief and rejection. But surprisingly they do not promote the opposites of riches, surfeit, laughter and status. Instead, Jesus' teaching affirms that God stands with and blesses the marginalised. The implication being that if this is what God does, then so should we; and if we find ourselves in these situations, we can be reassured that God is by our side.

This taps into the great themes of Luke's gospel. His picture of Jesus is one of enormous compassion and mercy for the poor and the lowly, the outsider and the disadvantaged. It is a gospel of universality and inclusion.

## CONCLUDING PRAYER

May almighty God always keep every adversity far from us  
and in his kindness pour out upon us the gifts of his blessing.

**Amen.**

May God keep our hearts attentive to his words,  
that they may be filled with everlasting gladness.

**Amen.**

And so, may we always understand what is good and right,  
and be found ever hastening along  
in the path of God's commands,  
made coheirs with the citizens of heaven.

**Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

**Amen.**

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time V, Roman Missal p. 716)

*An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.*

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### FIRST READING ( NRSV)

**A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah 17:5–8**

Thus says the Lord:

"Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals  
and make mere flesh their strength,  
whose hearts turn away from the Lord.  
They shall be like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see when relief comes.  
They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water;  
sending out its roots by the stream.  
This tree shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit."

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM ( NRSV)

**Psalm 1.1-2, 3, 4+6 (R. Ps 40.4)**

**R.** Happy are they who hope in the Lord.

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;  
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law they meditate day and night. **R.**

They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither.  
In all that they do, they prosper. **R.**

The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.  
for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish. **R.**

## SECOND READING ( NRSV)

### A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15:12, 16–20

If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead,  
how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

For if the dead are not raised,  
then Christ has not been raised.  
If Christ has not been raised,  
your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.  
Then those also who have died in Christ have perished.

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ,  
we are of all people most to be pitied.  
But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead,  
the first fruits of those who have died.

## GOSPEL ( NRSV)

### A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 6:17, 20–26

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a level place,  
with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people  
from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

Then Jesus looked up at his disciples and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.  
Blessed are you who are hungry now,  
for you will be filled.  
Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.  
Blessed are you when people hate you,  
and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you  
on account of the Son of Man.  
"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,  
for surely your reward is great in heaven;  
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

"But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your consolation.  
Woe to you who are full now,  
for you will be hungry.  
Woe to you who are laughing now,  
for you will mourn and weep.  
Woe to you when all speak well of you,  
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets."