

Sunday Message

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 29 January 2023 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 4



OUR IDENTITY CARD (MT 5:1-12)

A crowd of people follow Jesus. Searching for a place in which to teach them, he goes up a hillside. For Matthew, the hill has symbolic value. It was on the mountain of Sinai that Moses received the Law from God.

Matthew is deftly suggesting that Jesus, surrounded by his disciples (just as a rabbi would be surrounded by his disciples or students), is a kind of new Moses. Much of what he will teach will echo the teaching Moses received on Mount Sinai and passed on to Israel. He will also exercise the kind of authority in interpreting that Law that no rabbi would ever have assumed. Rabbis sat to deliver teaching; Jesus sits to deliver the sermon.

The opening part of the sermon is usually known as the Beatitudes. Beatitude means blessed. Matthew has nine beatitudes. Each follows a set form – the first part proclaims that certain people are blessed. The second part promises them a reward (the kingdom of heaven, mercy, etc). They fall into two sets of four, with the final longer beatitude on responding to persecution standing alone.

What is surprising about Jesus' beatitudes is that they do not simply repeat the blessings of the Old Testament. The Old Testament praised with a beatitude those who were kind to the poor ("happy are those who are kind to the poor" (Prov 14:21), for example), but would never have considered poverty a blessing. By contrast, the beatitudes of Jesus show that God is on the side of the weak and the outcast.

Such a standard turns the world upside down: to live by the beatitudes requires a strong commitment to justice and a temperament that doesn't flinch in the presence of persecution. It is only possible to live such a life if one's hopes are set on the coming of the kingdom of heaven, which will overturn the structures that oppress the poor.

The beatitudes turn the world's values upside down. They invert our common perception of success and failure, strength and weakness, happiness and sadness. They are our rules for life, our template for living. ■

SAY

Lord, help me to align my will with yours, as expressed in the beatitudes. Help me to follow your example.

PRAY

Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called children of God." Pray today for those who work for peace throughout our world. Give thanks for them. Remember those who are the victims of violence and warfare. Pray also for yourself – that you will always be an agent of peace.

REFLECT

In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis calls the beatitudes "the Christian's identity card". Nowadays, our purses or wallets are full of cards – our driving licence, social security card, bank cards, travel pass, club cards of one kind or another. We carry many identity cards, but the most important card we carry is not in our wallets. It is in our hearts, shown in our actions, showcased in our daily living. Pope Francis says: "If anyone asks: what must one do to be a good Christian?" then "the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount." We gain true happiness by aligning our wills with the will of God, as expressed in the beatitudes. In living like this, Pope Francis says, we become saints.

This challenge can seem too demanding. But not if we break it down, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. Pope Francis gives a simple description of how to do this. "This holiness to which the Lord calls you," he says, "will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: 'No, I will not speak badly of anyone.' This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step."

These ordinary gestures are an example of holiness any of us can make any day. Making the ordinary extraordinary, the seemingly insignificant significant. That's how we become saints.

The beatitudes are our doorway to holiness. Live them, and you'll be a saint. ■

LEARN

The beatitudes are the attitudes or values that Christians must live by, our identity card.

The Sermon on the Mount offers Jesus' vision for our world. ■

DO

Take some time to read the beatitudes slowly. How well are you trying to live them?

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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29th January 2023
4th Sunday in ordinary time

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

*St Brigid's Crosses and Candles will be blessed on
Wed evening and Fri evening*

Anniversaries

Dechomet

Sat 28th Ellie Morgan (MM)
Mickey Turley

Leitrim

Sat 28th Henry & Rita O'Hare
Margaret Blaney
John Anthony Cunningham
Evelyn Clarke
Sat 4th Fr Jim Mooney
Patsy McGlue and Paul McEleney
Michael Murphy

Dromara

Sun 29th Eileen & Paddy Dillon
Frank, Mary & Patrick Galbraith
Fri 3rd Kathleen O'Hare
Sun 5th Peter McEvoy & Martin Drake
Daniel, Liam & Mary Marmion

Cemetery Sunday 21st May 2023

SVDP

If you are struggling with food/heating bills,
etc., please contact us:

Dromara 077 3883 8191, or
Drumgooland 078 2541 9067

Safeguarding contact: P Carville 077 8991 7741

Gargory Altar Rota Feb Roseleen & Anne

Services of Light Preparation for Confirmation

St Matthew's Tues 31st 7:30pm

Drumgooland Parish Council

Meeting Mon 6th Feb 8pm Parochial House

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£427	£790

The collection will be taken up during mass from February onwards. Thank you to all who have given such generous support to the parish and myself over the past three years

Dromara New Cemetery

The contract has been awarded to Moybrick Construction

Feast Days of the week

Mon 30th St Aidan

Aidan studied under David in Wales, and on his return to Ireland he founded a Monastery at Ferns. He became Bishop there and was renowned for his generosity and kindness

Tues 31st St John Bosco

John became involved in publishing catechetical material for youth. He is Patron St of youth and of Catholic Publishers

Wed 1st Feb St Brigid

Brigid is renowned for her hospitality, almsgiving and care of the sick. The St Brigid's Cross, in legend used by Brigid to explain the Christian faith, remains a popular sign of God's protection

St Brigid's Blessing

May Brigid bless the house wherein we dwell
Bless every fireside, every wall and door
Bless every heart that beats beneath it's roof
Bless every hand that toils to bring it's joy
Bless every foot that walk portals through
May Brigid bless the house that shelters us

Fri 3rd St Blaise

Tradition states that he was a Physician before becoming a Bishop. Since the 8th Century he has been venerated as Patron of those who suffer disease of the throat