

Suggested Opening Song: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, #206

Matthew structures his Gospel around five lengthy sermons of Jesus and today we hear the beginning of the first of them, the well-known and oft-quoted Sermon on the Mount. It can be a challenge to hear it as the radical departure from conventional thinking that it was when Jesus first spoke these words from the mountaintop. May we ask God for the grace to realign our ideals and realize the kingdom of heaven.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honor you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 96

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, who have observed his law; seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger. But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly,

who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord: the remnant of Israel. They shall do no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

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

R/ Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

R/ Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

The Lord keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed,
Gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets captives free. **R/.**

The Lord gives sight to the blind; The Lord raises up those who were bowed down.
The Lord loves the just; / the Lord protects strangers. **R/.**

The fatherless and the widow the Lord sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts.
The Lord shall reign forever; your God O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 5:1-12

Glory to you, Lord

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for reward will be great in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- It's difficult to imagine a more countercultural way for Jesus to begin the first of his five sermons that make up Matthew's Gospel. At that time and as far back as Adam and Eve, poverty and misery were regarded as punishment for sin. These were signs that you certainly did not have God's blessing. To some extent this is

still true, though our culture often puts the blame on the people themselves. In any case, no one who is poor in any way is usually considered blessed. But this is what Jesus leads with. Not only that, so are those in mourning, those too meek to get their way, victims of injustice, and so on. If God truly is blessing them, why are they still so misfortunate?

- Perhaps the answer is that the world does not see how God sees. The world sees the outward signs of a difficult life; God sees someone in need of grace and mercy. The wise person puts their trust in God, not trusting the fickle finger of fate, which could upend anyone's life at any time, but leaning on God to help them overcome their obstacles. In the end, God has come to save us, in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus can tell his disciples that the kingdom of heaven awaits the poor and persecuted of the world.
- But it is in this world that Jesus is teaching his disciples how to live. He has just called them to leave everything behind and follow him. To the folks they left behind, it seemed a foolish thing to abandon their families, homes, and livelihoods to wander off without any concrete plans. But they have chosen to rely on God's grace instead of worldly possessions. As Paul later writes, he has made the same choice, enabling him to "boast in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:31).

Question of the Week

How will I allow myself to be meek, merciful, and poor in spirit, choosing to rely more often on God's grace?

Prayer of the Faithful:

With humility of heart, we bring our prayers and the prayers of our sisters and brothers before the Lord, asking for God's blessings upon those in need.

- For the Church, that we may give witness to the Beatitudes and lead more people to truly value what God blesses, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those in authority, that they may hunger and thirst for justice, peace, and righteousness, leading them to achieve more of each in the community, the nation, and the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those considering a vocation, that they may realize the spiritual reward of consecrating themselves to God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those who struggle to be merciful, that their hearts and wills may be moved by the mercy shown to them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those mourning loved ones, that their faith may be a comfort to them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you sent your Son to save us and to lead us to you. Bless us as we strive to live true to the Beatitudes. Hear this and all our prayers, through the one who showed us the way to you, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 180

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished by these redeeming gifts, we pray, O Lord, that through this help to eternal salvation true faith may ever increase.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: We Are the Light of the World, #249