

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026

[Zephaniah 2:3,3:12-13 Psalm 146; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Matthew 5:1-12a]

Most of you know that I am a big football fan, in particular Celtic. A few years ago we had a manager called Ange Postecoglu, he was very successful with Celtic, before winning a European Trophy with Spurs and then having a miserable time with Forest. His main philosophy in football was to never give up, he said, *'let the others give up if they want to, we keep going right to the end'*; this encouraged a zeal in his players to win the ball back quickly and to play right up until the final whistle in every game. The Beatitudes also tell us not to give up. Jesus is saying that whatever life throws at us we are to think of him, **think about our end goal and to persist in our journey to heaven.**

Our readings today, point us towards Jesus' message in the Gospel. The first words used in our reading from the prophet Zephaniah tell us to *'seek the LORD, all you humble of the land'*. When we consider these words and read the Gospel we are reminded to keep the **LORD ever in our mind**, and to trust in God.

The psalm, is a psalm which oozes mercy, reminding us how merciful God; is towards us and setting the example of how we are to be merciful towards each other. This reminds us of the Jesus' promise that if we are merciful then we shall receive mercy.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, St Paul is telling us that Jesus did not choose the people we would automatically choose to spread the Good News. He did not choose priests, or teachers or people with high profiles. Jesus chose fishermen to become *fishers of men*. Jesus chose sinners who had received His forgiveness to speak about how wonderful the mercy of God is; and Jesus has chosen us to be part of His Body, the Church. When St Paul says that *'God chose the weak in the world to shame the strong'*, he is saying in another way *'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.'*

Looking at the Beatitudes in turn, Jesus said

'Blessed are the poor in spirit...', who are the poor in spirit? These are the people who know they need God's forgiveness, they are actively seeking out God, yearning to love God more, not happy to settle for mediocrity in their faith, never giving up in their search for God. ***'...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'***.

'Blessed are those who mourn....' we have all mourned at some time or another, when we lose a loved one we pray for their soul, we ask God to comfort us and others who mourn. Jesus is telling us not to forget the dead and to have hope that He has taken them to a better place; the same place He is preparing for us. When we weep for a loved one we are crying out to Jesus, who knew what it was like to weep out of grief. In Him, we have that hope and we can find comfort. ***'....for they shall be comforted.'***

‘Blessed are the meek....’ it often seems that only those with loud voices or the proud get heard, Jesus turns that on its head. If you think you have everything in this life and don’t use it to help others, then you will lose your inheritance; however, if those with the quiet calm still voices persist and use the stillness, they will hear the voice of God and ***‘they will inherit the earth.’***

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...’ As Christians we are not supposed to be passive when we see others being wronged. We are supposed to speak up, use the voices and the intellect God has given us and to say to those who are being unjust, or who are proposing an unjust law, ***‘this is not right’***. We must never sit idly by and allow harm to come to others without getting involved. Never giving up in the fight for what is right, because Jesus promised ***‘they shall be satisfied.’***

‘Blessed are the merciful...’ some cultures urge their followers to show no mercy, that it is seen as a sign of weakness. Jesus teaches us that showing mercy is a strength and that when we offer others mercy then we ***‘shall receive mercy’***.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart...’ purity comes from God. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree, they took away the purity which God intended for us. Those who seek to be pure in heart; looking to love when it is time to love and abstain when it is time to abstain truly seek God, for those Jesus’ promise is that ***‘they shall see God.’***

‘Blessed are the peacemakers....’ This is not just the politicians looking to win a Nobel prize or some made up award to boost their already inflated ego. Peace starts in our homes; do we truly seek to make peace with those we live with? Do we try to live a peaceful life? Do we really mean it when we offer each other the sign of peace at Mass? If we do, then Jesus is promising us that we ***‘...shall be called sons of God.’***

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...’ Jesus is asking us again, to trust in him. We are to be prepared to put everything on the line and speak up for what is right, to hold true to the teachings of the Gospel no matter what it costs. Jesus is saying that no matter what happens, we are to keep going, persevere and never give up we must keep going and we will reach our goal ***‘ the kingdom of heaven.’***

‘Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account...’ Jesus is basically saying that if people are doing this, then you are living out all of His commandments. You are putting into action the faith which He has given us. If these things are happening to you, it means you are on the right road and that you must ***‘..Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.*** Notice Jesus does not say your reward will be, He says your reward is great in heaven. This is the promise the martyrs held onto, which strengthened their resolve.

The Beatitudes are our encouragement to stay close to Jesus in this world; which if we can live up to them, guarantees that **we will be with Jesus** in the next.

At a recent RCIA session, one of the participants referred to these simply, as the Be attitudes...I couldn't have put it any better myself. Have a great week.

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCC 459, 520-521: Jesus a model of the beatitudes for followers

CCC 1716-1724: call to beatitude

CCC 64, 716: the poor and humble remnant bear hope of Messiah¹

[What The Eight Beatitudes Mean For Our World Today | Jocelyn Soriano](#)

Please remember in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- All people affected by war and that international treaties for the protection of non-combatants and civilians are respected and adhered to.
- Those attending the RCIA programmes.
- Those attending the Youth Alpha programme which is a prerequisite for the Confirmation programme in our Pastoral Area.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.

Deacon Tony

31st January 2026

¹ [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)