



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 17th February 2019

In England and Wales –

Cycle of Prayer: Prayer for Racial Justice

Keynote: A blessing on the one who trusts in the Lord

Prophet Jeremiah 17: 5-8

Jeremiah contrasts the empty promises of humankind with the blessings that come with trust in the Lord God. *'The man who puts his trust in man... the one whose heart turns from the Lord...'* is like the man who *'settles in the parched places of the wilderness, a salt land, uninhabited.'* In contrast *'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.'* So, the prophet urges us to place all our hope in the Lord God.

Responsorial Psalm 1 (1) – Happy the one who lives in the way of God

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20

Following the theme of the previous passages read in recent weeks from this letter, the apostle Paul again emphasises the important fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Paul recognises the debate then taking place in Corinth *'for if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised... and you are still in your sins... and we are the most unfortunate of people.'* In previous extracts from this letter, Paul reminded his readers that Christ had risen and appeared to Cephas, the Twelve, and even to five hundred of the brothers at once, and then finally to Paul himself. The apostle says: *'if our hope in Christ had been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate of people.'* Paul now reminds the Christian community at Corinth of a fundamental fact underpinning their life of faith: *'Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep.'*

Gospel according to Luke 6: 17, 20-26

Jesus speaking to the crowds, who had come to hear him, makes a comparison like that of Jeremiah in the first reading. But first a word about the translation in this version. 'Happy' – not always a strong word in our language – is used to translate the term *'makarios'*. The Greek word is much richer in meaning. The blessedness that comes with being one of God's chosen is enriched with happiness and fulfilment, and with a wholeness of being: a sense of joy. Jesus – the teacher addressing the poor people, the hungry, those in tears, the people being bullied or abused, speaks of this happy blessedness very much in contrast to what his hearers might have expected, Jesus says: *'How happy are you who are poor: yours in the kingdom of God. Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied. Happy you who weep now: you will laugh.'* While in contrast: *'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 when the world speaks well of you! This was the way your ancestors treated false prophets.'* For such folk will go hungry, they shall mourn and weep. Jesus invites his disciples to place their trust in God alone if they are seekers of true happiness and the blessedness that comes with living in the sight of God.

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