

Blessed are you who are
poor,
for the Kingdom of God is
yours.

Blessed are you who are
now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who are
now weeping,
for you will laugh.

Luke 6

Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time: Sept. 6-12, 2009

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Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Twenty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time**. Isaiah offers comforting words: "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you." In **Mark's Gospel**, Jesus heals a deaf and mute man. The people are astonished and say of Jesus, "He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Tuesday is the **Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, with its own special readings from **Matthew's Gospel**.

The first part of the week, the first readings are from the **Letter to the Colossians**. Paul is in prison, encouraging this community to put their trust in Christ, not mystical teachings and powers. He challenges them to live their baptism and to walk in the union they have with and in Jesus. On Friday, we begin readings from the **First Letter of Timothy**, readings which will go through next week.

As we follow **Luke's Gospel**, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand, on the Sabbath, in front of his religious critics. Then Jesus goes up on a mountain to pray and comes

Daily Prayer This Week

When we place Jesus at the center of our lives, two marvelous graces are given us. We experience God's love for us in the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus. As grateful sinners, we then are able to forgive others.

As we begin each day this week, we can let these two graces be part of our reflection. We can ask our Lord to show us his love. We can fearlessly ask to understand who we are as sinners, in the concrete ways each of us falls short, gets distracted, becomes uncentered and makes very unfree choices. We can ask to be forgiven and healed. This journey each day might take us into specific patterns, habits, ruts we're in. We may even want to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation this week.

We can choose to focus carefully this week on those people we ask for the grace to forgive. Whose faults do I pay most attention to? Whom do I judge harshly? From whom do I withhold forgiveness? If we begin each day, asking our Lord to reveal the answers to these questions, throughout our day, our days this week will show us deeper places where the Lord can forgive us

down to name his twelve apostles - all of whom seem to be unknown or questionable at best. The people bring all their sick to hear him and to be healed. Jesus teaches the Beatitudes, telling them of their blessedness and warning them of the dangers. His message is clear and direct: "Stop judging and you will not be judged.... For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." He challenges the hypocrisy in all of our lives: "Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?" He says we should not just listen, but act on his words. "But the one who listens and does not act is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation."

On the **Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear in **Mark's Gospel** as Jesus tell his disciples about his passion, death and resurrection to come in Jerusalem. Peter tries to prevent him from going there. Jesus rebukes him and tells the disciples and us that to be a disciple is to follow him, not trying to save one's life, but by dying to ourselves and losing ourselves for his sake and that of the Gospel. That is the only path to real life.

and where we can share that mercy. We can be aware that God's forgiveness of our many sins is a gift that God gives us freely. Now God asks that we share that gift with those who most need our forgiveness.

From the beginning of the week, we might ask Mary to gently guide us to trust her Son's love and to be more tender in loving those people her Son invites us to forgive and be a source of healing.

Throughout this week, we can also give thanks for the ways we are called to be Jesus' followers - not because we are extremely talented or because we are perfect, but because he saw in us something that he could heal and then send us to heal others. We can be especially attentive to the ways we are blessed in our poverty and in the ways we sometimes experience rejection as his disciples.

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