



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Date: Sunday, February 16, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time before Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Jeremiah 17:5–8

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 1:1–4, 6 | **Response:** Psalm 40:5a

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16–20

Gospel Acclamation: Luke 6:23ab

Gospel Reading: Luke 6:17, 20–26

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

The words of the prophet Jeremiah cut through the noise of our world like a clarion call: “Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the Lord.” And yet, blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is in Him. The contrast is stark, as clear as the divide between night and day. But let us not be mistaken—this is no mere poetic flourish. This is the truth that undergirds the human soul.

For what is man without God? A withered bush in the desert, parched and lifeless. And what is man with God? A tree planted by the waters, drawing life from an eternal source, flourishing even in drought, unshaken by fear. Here, in these words, Jeremiah does not simply describe the fate of nations; he describes the drama of our own hearts. We know what it is to place our trust in ourselves, in wealth, in power, in the fleeting assurances of this world—and we know how quickly these things crumble. We have seen it in history, in our communities, in our own lives. But those who root themselves in God, who plant themselves beside the living water of His Word, will never be shaken.

The psalmist echoes this truth with a song of defiance against the false securities of this world: “Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.” And here we must pause, for hope is not a fragile thing. It is not wishful thinking or blind optimism. Hope is strength; it is courage; it is a deep, unshakable certainty that the Lord is faithful, that His promises endure. The wicked may seem to prosper, the righteous may seem to struggle, but the final word belongs to God.

And then, we come to Christ, who stands upon the plain and proclaims the Beatitudes. Here is no gentle sermon to soothe the comfortable. Here is no speech crafted to win favor. No, Christ does what He always does: He turns the world upside down. “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.” Blessed are the hungry, the weeping, the hated. And woe to the rich, the full, the laughing, the praised. It is a teaching as shocking now as it was then.

But this is no mere reversal of fortune; it is a revelation of God’s justice. It is not wealth itself that Christ condemns, nor suffering itself that He glorifies. Rather, He exposes the truth: those who place their trust in earthly security are building on sand. Those who suffer for righteousness are building on rock. He is calling us to see the world as God sees it, to measure success not by comfort but by faithfulness, not by gain but by grace.

What does this mean for us, here and now? It means that if our security is in power, in prestige, in material wealth, then we must ask ourselves: what happens when the storm comes? If our hope is built on Christ, if our trust is in God, then no storm, no trial, no suffering can take it away.

The saints understood this well. Consider St. Josephine Bakhita, who suffered the cruelty of slavery and yet, when she found Christ, discovered a freedom that no chain could take from her. She did not place her trust in human strength, in revenge, in wealth. She placed it in God. And so, she was blessed beyond measure.

And what of us? We who live in a world where the poor still struggle, where the hungry still cry out, where the powerful still hold sway? The Gospel is not a relic of the past; it is the burning truth of the present. It asks us, today: where do we place our trust? In systems built by men, in comforts that pass away—or in the Lord, who alone remains?

And so, as we walk away from this place, let us - along with praying for Pope Francis who is in hospital - take these questions to prayer:

- In what ways am I placing my trust in the fleeting securities of this world rather than in God?
- How am I called to live out the Beatitudes in my daily life—to stand with the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful?

- Am I willing to build my life on the foundation of Christ, even when the world calls me a fool for doing so?

May we be bold. May we be faithful. May we, like trees planted beside the waters, never be shaken.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-02feb-16-yc-ot-06/>

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.