

Homily for the 2nd Sunday After Christmas 2022 Year C

Today is the first Sunday of the New Year. We cast off the burden and the tiredness of 2021 and begin a fresh start.

As human beings, we are all too familiar with sin and failure. We need as many incentives and opportunities as we can get for a fresh start. We need occasions when we can pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and start again.

The New Year is just one such occasion. We can put all the past behind us and form our 'New Year's Resolutions'. God himself only knows how long those last, but it is just as important to renew these resolutions when we break them, as it was to make them in the first place.

If you haven't made any New Year's resolutions yet, here are just a few suggestions taken from the Beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit For Theirs Is The Kingdom Of Heaven

Let us resolve to become poor in spirit and privately to have a year of personal austerity. All our needs are different, but now and then why not go without something for our own personal mortification and give the value of it to the poor? Know the wisdom of what is enough for us and try not to set our hearts on things beyond that, then we will have a happy New Year.

Blessed Are The Gentle For They Shall Inherit The Earth

Let us resolve that, even though at times we must be hard on ourselves, we should always try and be gentle with other people. It might mean being trodden under-foot and being used by them but let us try to remain gently under-foot; it will cost a lot, but deep down it will be a happy New Year.

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn, For They Shall Be Comforted

This doesn't mean the morning at death. For Christians to die is to live. Let us resolve rather to mourn for our own stupidity and sin, all our wrong goals, our insatiable greed, personal selfishness and all the waste and misuse of our lives. Repent everyday, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner", and through working hard at life and knowing and trusting in God's forgiveness, then you will have a happy New Year.

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger And Thirst For What Is Right. They Shall Be Satisfied.

All around us things are wrong, wrong in life at home, broken marriages, alcoholism, wife beating, misunderstanding and abuse of children, violence, failure to care for the elderly and the deprived. We live beyond our means and beyond our needs. We fail to house the homeless; education is in a muddle; there is euthanasia, abortion, drug abuse and many other ills in the world. Let us resolve to hunger and thirst and strive for social justice and peace, for a better world. Accept that you will not achieve everything, but it will be a happy New Year if you hunger and thirst for what is right.

Blessed Are The Merciful For They Shall Have Mercy Shown To Them.

We are all sinners, and it is so easy to pass judgement upon others and condemn them. Let us resolve to recognise this in ourselves and try to be merciful to ourselves and to others, and not be self-indulgent, selfish or lazy, and acknowledge our own failures and accept God's mercy.

Forgive as you would wish to be forgiven; build up the good in others; encourage and reinforce success; help truth, beauty, caring and love to grow. Let the gentle rain of mercy fall all around you until goodness sprouts against the weeds of self-righteousness. Be merciful and you will have a happy New Year.

Blessed Are The Pure In Heart For They Shall See God

To be pure in heart is to be clear headed, single minded and single hearted. Let us then resolve to get our priorities right in 2022 or we will never be really happy. Seek God and the things of God first and always, do not let ambition, power, money or friends side-track you. Utterly pure in heart, Christ always sought His Father's will. We too will be utterly happy in the new Year if we are pure in heart.

Blessed Are The Peacemakers, For They Should Be Called Sons Of God.

Let us resolve to make 2022 a year of peace. Peace in our families and our homes; between parents and children; brothers and sisters; husbands and wives. Stretch out your hand in friendship and reconcile, smooth, and win over. Put aside personal prejudices over colour, race, or creed. Christ's greeting was always "Peace be with you". Be a peacemaker and let peace, like a river,

flow all around you, and you will have a happy New Year and be at peace yourself.

But remember Christ's warning that the peace He gives us is not as the world gives. There at the end of the Sermon on the Mount He concludes by saying, "Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right. Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account". Rejoice and be glad. So, as true Christians, happiness is really going to cost us something.