

**FOURTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Great and glorious God,
all we have and all we are
comes from you.
Look after us always;
keep us from doing
what is wrong,
and let us never forget
how much we need you.
We pray to you
through Jesus, your Son.

FIRST READING: *Zephaniah 2:3, 3:11-13*

This is a reading from the prophet Zephaniah.

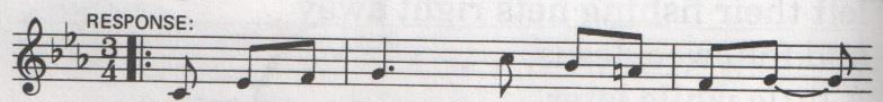
Our God says,

“Stay close to me, all you who are poor
and who keep my commandments.
Try to be humble,
and treat people with justice.
Then, when I come,
you will not be punished.
I will take away the people who are proud,
but I will leave a small group of people
who are humble and simple.
They will turn to me for help.
They will not do evil things,
or lie, or be dishonest.
They will have food and rest.
And no one will make them afraid.”

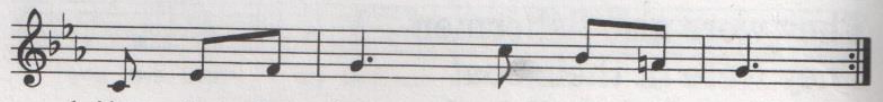
The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 113*

RESPONSE:



1. You love the poor, you love the need - y. ____
2. Teach us to love the poor and need - y, ____

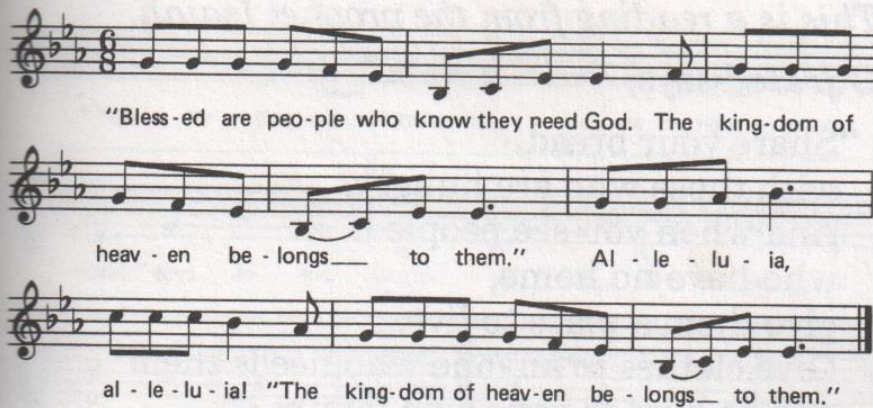


1. You give them help, you care for them.
2. to give them help, to care for them.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the poor and humble. Both praise those who express simplicity and humility in justice and peace. In the first reading, the poor are urged to turn to God for help and they will find peace. The beatitudes present the ultimate paradox of Christian life and can be seen as worthwhile only by the believer whose source of grace is Christ. Those who accept their poverty and humility and who express their need for God in justice and peace are blessed.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



"Bless-ed are peo-ple who know they need God. The king-dom of
heav-en be-longs to them." Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia! "The king-dom of heav-en be-longs to them."

GOSPEL: *Matthew 5:1-12a*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus went up on a mountain
with his disciples, and he taught them, saying:

"Blessed are people who know they need God,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

Blessed are people who are sad now,
for later, God will comfort them.

Blessed are people who are humble,
for God will give them everything.

Blessed are people who work for justice,
for God will give them all they need.

Blessed are people who show mercy to others,
for God will have mercy on them.

Blessed are people who have hearts
that are pure, for they will see God.

Blessed are people who make peace,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are people
who suffer for doing what is right,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

["And you are blessed when people hurt you
and say bad things about you
because you believe in me.

Be happy and glad,
for God will reward you in heaven."]

The Gospel of the Lord.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Reflecting on the beatitudes will not be easy with children, for the beatitudes present the opposite of all that seems reasonable. Poverty, sorrow, hunger and mistreatment will hardly seem like blessings. But two things may be hoped for with the children:

1) To provide familiarity with the beatitudes, the heart of the Christian way of life. Here again, we are planting seeds that, with life's experience and God's constant grace, will grow to maturity. It is enriching for children to hear and be familiar with the truths of our faith, even if, as yet, they do not fully understand them.

2) To help the children understand that, whatever our condition in life, God asks for our trust. If we are poor or hungry, or sad or mistreated, God can and will make things right. This may, of course, only be realized in heaven. Likewise, if we have more than we need, we must trust that when we share what we have, God will continue to take care of us and bless us. Sorrow comes when we don't trust God and, therefore, live selfishly rather than for others.

