

Homily 6th Sunday Year C 2022

John Pilch sj writes that *'the word "poor" in biblical culture describes a social reality rather than an economic one'*. Something we would do well to recognise today. Social poverty concerned power and powerlessness in Jesus' time and could apply to the wealthy and the economically poor alike. Pilch adds that: *'The culturally more appropriate translation of "rich" and "poor" in the Bible, therefore, would be "greedy" and "socially unfortunate."* Jeremiah lays down the challenge that you either place your trust in Man (flesh/self) or God. This is a constant challenge we all face. Man in this case stands for power, importance, status, wealth in which it is difficult if not impossible to give God a place. By placing our complete trust in God, however, we find that it does not exclude man; after all, Jesus became man in becoming one of us. Experience has also taught us that Jesus often works through people to show his care, love, concern and compassion for us. Jesus brings us closer to others whereas placing full trust in Man could never achieve this.

Philosophers have argued about the meaning of *happiness* since the beginning of time and the debate continues. By replacing *Happy* with the word *Blessed*, the beatitudes become *Blessed are the poor, blessed are the hungry, blessed those who weep, blessed the persecuted*. Hearing the beatitudes as blessings in Luke, we will see them as opportunities to be blessed by God - meaning that we will discover how God is present in those we seek to help and that presence will inspire, motivate and energise us into loving action.

John Henry Newman's prayer shows how putting God at the forefront changes our perspective on everything, even the most difficult experiences of life.

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between people. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him. Whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, God knows what He is about.

- After hearing a shot, Frank ran next door and found his friend Tony crying. "Hay, what's wrong?" Frank asked. Tony sobbed, "I had to shoot my dog." Frank said, "My God! Was he mad?" Tony replied, "Well, he wasn't exactly overjoyed."
- An aged farmer and his wife were leaning against the edge of their pig-pen when the old woman wistfully recalled that the next week would mark their golden wedding anniversary. "Let's have a party, Homer," she suggested. "Let's kill a pig." The farmer scratched his grizzled head. "Gee, Ethel," he finally answered, "I don't see why the pig should take the blame for something that happened fifty years ago."