

# May Jesus Christ Be Praised Newsletter

January 29, 2017



## Breaking Open the Word

**JANUARY 29, 2017 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Lectionary: 70 Gospel MT 5:1-12A**

**Spiritual Reflection:** When a person is cooking, sometimes the most important part of the recipe is what the recipe tells you to leave out. In today's Gospel Jesus gives us His recipe for a happy life. He tells us to add in the virtue of being poor in spirit otherwise known as detachment and to leave out the pursuit of wealth for the sake of being wealthy and so on. Each Beatitude therefore is not only an encouragement to live in a certain way but also an admonishment to leave certain things out of our lives.

### **Spiritual Questions**

1. Why should we care what Jesus has to say about finding happiness?
2. What are the things that Jesus wants us to put into our lives?
3. What are the things that He wants us to keep out of our lives?
4. What happens if we add the things into the recipe that we should keep out?
5. Does God really want you to be happy?



## PRAYER OF THE WEEK

THE PRAYER, BLESS THIS DAY.

This day is full of beauty and adventure, help me Lord to be fully alive to it all. During this day, may I become a more thoughtful person, a more prayerful person, a more generous and kindly person.

Help me not to be turned in on myself but to be sensitive and helpful to others. Let me do nothing today that will hurt anyone, but let me help at least a little, to make life more pleasant for those I meet.

When night comes, may I look back on this day without regrets; and may nobody be unhappy because of anything I have said or done or failed to do.

Lord God, bless this day for me and all of us. Make it a day in which we grow a little more like your Son, and gentle as Mary His Mother. - Amen.



## Spiritual Adoption 0-1 Month

I am asking you to spiritual adopt a child who is in danger of being aborted by praying the following prayer every day for the child.

***"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of [baby's name] the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion."*** - Prayer of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

You can also keep track of your spiritual baby's progress by checking out the informational articles below each month.

### **DAY 1 – Developing Baby -- "I'm here!"**

At the moment, the father's sperm and mother's egg unite a new and unrepeatable human being comes into existence, complete with his own unique set of DNA. Although she is only one cell, everything about this little person is already present: color of eyes, blood type, the height she will grow to be, color of hair – everything! She will play a role in her family and her community – a role only she can play! Nothing is added after conception to make her a complete human being. She already exists; all she needs is nourishment, a safe, warm environment, and most of all – love. Her parents don't even know she exists yet. Pray for them to safely bring their baby to birth so she can fulfill the mission God has for her.



## Spiritual Ponderings:

### **Spiritual Ponderings**

Here are the last three points of my reflection. I hope that they have helped deepen your faith life.

#### **8. Doubts**

At the end of St. Matthew's Gospel, we hear "When they (the apostles) saw Him (the resurrected Jesus) they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful (Matthew 28: 17)." The apostles had seen the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the Transfiguration, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection and still they had doubts. This is Good

News for us because we know that Jesus did not give up on them and we can therefore trust that he will not give up on us. The most important thing we can do with our doubts is to take them to the Lord in prayer and share them with others. In moments of doubt it is important to be reminded of all those times that we did not doubt. Doubting is fine but allowing our doubts to pile up on top of each other is not only not fine it can lead us to walk away from our faith therefore to strengthen our faith we must take the time to address any doubts one at a time as they come up.

If we do not address the problems we have with another person when they arise we can store these problems up and then dump them on the other individual. While holding these conflicts inside instead of dealing with them, we allow our negative feelings to grow stronger as well. Addressing the doubts directly by talking to others can help stop this negative build up. Do not be afraid to really find out what the Church teaches about a subject by talking to one or more people who are in the know about a topic. For example, if I do not understand things, I have at least three priests I consult before I make up my mind. Each of them normally gives me a different perspective upon my problem.

#### **9. Confusing Self-Help For Religion**

Another reason why people end up leaving the Church is that they confuse Church with being a sort of self-help organization. While the Church does desire you to be the best person you can be. St Irenaeus of Lyon said "The glory of God is a person fully alive." Catholic faith is above all about building a relationship with God and others and if we are concern solely with our own advancement and not a relationship with God or others we become self-centered and self-absorbed. Self-help turns directs our vision inwards and creates selfishness. Faith helps us develop relationships with others and the ultimate other. Self-improvement does play a role in all religions but it is not the end all in the Catholic faith. If we are not careful confusing self-help with faith can lead us into seeing God as a life coach holding a clipboard with a checklist on it instead of the loving Divine Being, Jesus reveals God to be.

#### **10. Wrong Image of God**

I have yet to meet a true atheist. Most people, I know that call themselves atheists are "anti-theists." It is not that they do not believe in God but rather they want to rebel against God. A true atheist would spend his time pitying and not caring about what people or faith are doing verses trying to convert them to their way of thinking. A true atheist would not be upset about the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. He might not recite it but

he has no reason to feel attacked with others use the phrase.

Instead most atheists in the world today see God not in the way Jesus revealed Him to us as a loving and carrying Father but as a super divine creature who is in competition with us. They carry with them the mindset that if God is winning then they must be losing and so they refuse to give into God even if the battle is useless or at least very lopsided.

They imagine God to be like Augustus Caesar who would crush anyone who disobeyed him instead of seeing God as the loving Father in the story of the Prodigal Son who forgave his son even after his son wished him dead. They imagine God to be like Hitler moving forward with force to get his way instead of like the Good Samaritan who stops to take care of the vulnerable and the needy. Finally, the imagine God to be like a merciless judge just waiting for the time we end up in his court instead of a loving Father who did not send his son into the world to condemn it but to save it (John 3:16).

How is your faith life? Are you consciously or subconsciously making these bad decisions as you live your daily life? How can you change the tide? I know that I am a bigger Cardinal fan now because I do not take my fandom for granted. I go to ball games, listen to the games on the radio, learn about the players, read about the team's history and so much more. I hope that your faith will grow stronger each and every day.



#### **Catholic Trivia**

##### **Last Week's Trivia Question & Answer**

1. When people die they become angels. – False
2. St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Jesuits. - True
3. There was a pope named Linus. - True

##### **Identify which of the following three are not gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

1. Wisdom
2. Trustworthiness
3. Understanding
4. Counsel
5. Devotedness
6. Fortitude
7. Bilocation
8. Knowledge
9. Piety
10. Fear of the Lord



#### **Catholic Humor**

Two little boys were known troublemakers, stealing everything they could get their hands, even from the church. One day a priest stopped one of the boys and asked, "Where is God?" The boy shrugged and the priest repeated, "Where is God?" The boy ran out of the cathedral crying to his home where he hid in a closet. Eventually his brother found him and asked, "What's wrong?" The crying boy replied, "We're in trouble now! God is missing and they think we took him!"



## Quote(s) of the Week

“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.” -St. Augustine

“Don’t you long to shout to those youths who are bustling around you: Fools! Leave those worldly things that shackle the heart – and very often degrade it – leave all that and come with us in search of Love!” -St. Josemaria Escriva

“For me prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” -St. Therese of Lisieux