

FAITH @Home

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Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!

Month of the
Holy Name of
Jesus

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Year A 4TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING:

Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 145(146): 6-10

SECOND READING:

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

GOSPEL:

Matthew 5:1-12a

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."



Image: www.press.thechosen.tv

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

- In the Gospel today we hear Jesus preaching part of what is often called His Sermon on the Mount. We focus in on the Beatitudes. Take some time to reflect on the key message of this week's Gospel
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Imagine yourself in this scene: how do these words strike your heart? Do you feel challenged? Do you feel encouraged? Do you feel confused?
- The Beatitudes are a reminder to us again that joy is deeper than circumstantial happiness. What blessings are in your life? Spend 5 minutes now and each morning when you wake thanking God for 10 blessings in your life at the moment or in the past.

Talk

Today's Gospel teaches us a lot about what joy in the Lord means versus success in the eyes of the world!

- Can you think of people who are really successful in today's world? What have they achieved? Are they rich? Are they famous? Do you think they have everything that is important in life?
- Who are the people you know who are happiest in life? Do you know anyone whose life is challenging, but they can always be joyful and see the good in life?
- Based on today's reading, what kind of life is Jesus calling us to live? What kind of priorities should we have? What kind of things should we not give too much importance to?

Family Challenge!

How can you live out the Beatitudes as a family this week? Can you be thankful for all the blessings God has given you? Can you try to complain less? Can you be more humble, a peace-maker, less interested in material things?

HAPPY, FORTUNATE, FAVOURED

Today's reading is the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which is found in Matthew's Gospel. The form of the Beatitudes found here is not unique to Jesus. Beatitudes are found in the Old Testament, in the psalms, and in wisdom literature, for example. They are a way to teach about who will find favor with God.

We quickly note in this reading that the people whom Jesus calls "blessed" and "happy" are not people we think of as blessed or happy . . . the poor in spirit, the meek, the persecuted. This Gospel is one of reversals. Jesus' blueprint for happiness reflects little of what the world might call happiness.

"Blessed" is sometimes translated as happy, fortunate, or favored. In other words, Jesus is saying that divine favor is upon those who are poor, those who mourn, those who are persecuted. This news might have been welcome—and surprising—to the crowds who heard Jesus that day.

The Beatitudes can be understood as a framework for Christian living. Our vocation as Christians is not to be first in this world, but rather to be first in the eyes of God. By referring to the good things that the faithful will experience, Matthew reminds us that those who act in the manner described in the Beatitudes will find their reward with God.

Adapted from **Loyola Press Sunday Connection**

CHECK IT OUT: CLONMACNOIS PRESS



Clonmacnois Press aims to be a witness to hope and to answer the ancient call of proclaiming the Gospel with a new ardour. It seeks to revive the old tradition of Clonmacnois whereby beautifully illustrated manuscripts were produced and spread outwards to a surrounding world that so hungered for the Gospel in the era following the collapse of the Roman Empire. They are committed to providing Catholic resources which serve the New Evangelisation and which have an Irish connection in their origin. Check out their beautiful "My First Holy Communion" Book, and the "Catholicism Beyond" Video Series.



"Joy lives not in the things that surround us, but lives only in the soul."
St Thérèse of Lisieux

CHOOSE JOY!

This Gospel passage tells the familiar story of the Sermon on the Mount, or part of it anyway, the part we refer to as the Beatitudes. If Jesus was running a modern day marketing campaign for the Church, people would think He was crazy! Happy are the meek, the persecuted, those who mourn, those who hunger... really? That just doesn't make sense, or at least not by the world's standards. Jesus knows our happiness cannot be based on the circumstances we find ourselves in, or our achievements or power or wealth: all these things are fickle and fleeting. True joy is based on the sure knowledge that we are created and loved by God, and no matter what life may throw at us, from bad weather, difficult exams, strained friendships, match losses, breakups, sickness and even death, we know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. United with Him, with our eyes fixed firmly on Him, we can choose joy in any circumstance. Our ultimate goal can't be earthly happiness: our ultimate goal is heaven, and any losses or inconveniences or suffering we may have to go through on our way there will pale into insignificance against the glory and never-ending joy of Heaven!

Take note this week of how often you are tempted to complain. Do you find yourself complaining about things that aren't even that important? Has it become a habit? Try for a whole day not to complain about anything. Instead say a silent prayer offering up the inconvenience, or asking God to bless those who annoy you! Say something positive and affirming instead!



Why Joy is more Christian than Happiness
(Fr Mike Schmitz)
The Beatitudes (Hillsong)

Check out our *To the Heights Youth Newsletter*



Family Prayer

Lord Jesus, the Beatitudes were at the very heart of your preaching and mission. Thank you for this road map on how to live a life worthy of you. Give us the grace and strength we need to choose joy in every aspect of our lives. Amen

EVENTS

Holy Mass to celebrate Consecrated Life in the Diocese, Tuesday 2nd February at 7pm in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford.

Lectio Divina: Join with the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to prayerfully read the Sunday Gospel, share and enjoy a chat over a cuppa. No cost. No experience reading the Bible needed. Queries: Sr. Kathryn 087 404 2784. Tuesdays, 2:30-4pm- St John's Pastoral Centre or Thursdays, 7:30-9pm- Sacred Heart Convent, Cedar Lodge (Newtown Rd.)

Intro to Theology of the Body Study Group, The Foyer of Charity, Dunmore East Waterford, X91 FC65. Tues 11am - 12.30pm. February 21-April 18. Prayer, DVD, Discussion, Tea/Coffee. Registration Essential: Helen 086 1678027 / hellywilliams@gmail.com

The Secret of Mary, St Louis de Montfort: The Foyer of Charity, Dunmore East Waterford, X91 FC65. Saturdays 11am - 12 midday. February 25th for 12 weeks. Prayer, Teaching, Cuppa. Registration Essential: Helen 086 1678027 / hellywilliams@gmail.com

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- "To the Heights" Youth Newsletter (youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie)
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WEEKLY
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FORTNIGHTLY

