

The Beatitudes, that we see in today's Gospel points out to a new way that leads to perfection. The righteous who hope in the Lord and delight in His Law, will prosper like a tree planted near living waters. The wicked, who put their "trust in human beings," are cursed to wither and die.

For Jesus, the rich and the poor are more than members of literal economic classes. Their material state symbolizes their spiritual state. The poor are the humble, who put all their hope and trust in the Lord. In the first reading, prophet Jeremiah reminds us that the rich boast of their self-sufficiency, the strength of their flesh.

In Mary's "Magnificat" we see a clear reference to the rich being cast down (because of their dependency in wealth, not on God) while the hungry are filled and the lowly exalted. That's the upside-down world of the Gospel: in poverty we gain spiritual treasure unimaginable; in suffering and even dying "on account of the Son of Man," we find everlasting life.

Unlike the Old Covenant (which promises power and prosperity), the New Covenant leads us to joy and true freedom even amidst misery and struggle. Hence, we are being invited by the Lord to receive God's special blessings that in joy we may feast at the heavenly table of the Lord each day.

Fr. Michael Jeeva Antony



Las Bienaventuranzas, que vemos en el Evangelio de hoy, apuntan a una nueva forma que conduce a la perfección. Los justos que esperan en el Señor y se deleitan en su ley, prosperarán como un árbol plantado cerca de las aguas vivas. Los malvados, que pusieron su "confianza en los seres humanos", están malditos para marchitarse y morir.

Para Jesús, los ricos y los pobres son más que miembros de clases económicas literales. Su estado material simboliza su estado espiritual. Los pobres son los humildes, que ponen toda su esperanza y confianza en el Señor. En la primera lectura, el profeta Jeremías nos recuerda que los ricos se jactan de su autosuficiencia, la fuerza de su carne.

En el "Magnificat" de María vemos una clara referencia a los ricos desechados (debido a su dependencia de la riqueza, no a Dios) mientras los hambrientos están llenos y los humildes exaltados. Ese es el mundo al revés del Evangelio: en la pobreza obtenemos un tesoro espiritual inimaginable; en el sufrimiento y hasta la muerte "a causa del Hijo del Hombre", encontramos la vida eterna.

A diferencia del Antiguo Pacto (que promete poder y prosperidad), la Nueva Alianza nos lleva a la alegría y a la verdadera libertad, incluso en medio de la miseria y la lucha. Por lo tanto, estamos siendo invitados por el Señor a recibir las bendiciones especiales de Dios que, en gozo, podemos deleitar en la mesa celestial del Señor cada día.

Padre Miguel Jeeva Antony

UPCOMING RETREATS:

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND — The next Marriage Encounter Weekend is **April 12-14 (2019)** at Powell Butte Retreat Ctr. (Powell Butte, OR—near Bend). Learn how to once again foster **COMMUNICATION AND RENEWAL IN YOUR MARRIAGE!** For more information call 503-853-2758 or apply on-line at www.rediscoverthespark.org.

Did you know that couples who attend a Worldwide Marriage encounter (WWME) Weekend:

- Experience only a 2% divorce rate
- Live the true meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage
- Become more involved in their church
- Renew the Church through discipleship with other couples

HEALING AND WHOLENESS AFTER ABORTION — Winter holidays are traditionally a time of reflection, and those who have lost children to abortion are reminded of the loss, the regrets, the if-onlys. Decide now that it is time for hope and healing — why wait any longer to heal? Experience a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, **March 15-17 (2019) in Medford**. It's a SAFE, Confidential, and Compassionate environment! For more info call: 541-942-2861, or email: projectaurora@aol.com, or visit the national website: www.project-aurora.org.

HOSPICE OF SACRED HEART — Caring men and women needed to provide practical help and emotional assistance to patients and families dealing with terminal illness, as well as the Palliative Care Program for those living with chronic illness. Info session is on Thursday, **February 21, 1:00-3:00pm**, at 677 E. 12th Ave (Eugene). Training will be the last week of April and first 2 weeks of May (2019). To register for the info meeting—no obligation! - please call Victoria at 458-205-7443, or email to: vspeak@peacehealth.org.

1ST WAY PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER — Located at: 1162 "B" St , #213 (Springfield)..... 10:00am—4:00pm, Tuesdays-Thursdays, and Fridays 11am—2pm; Helping to save lives, and helping women with free pregnancy tests, free ultrasounds, and resource info with health care. Donations needed to help provide baby layettes—diapers & wipes—clothing from preemie size to 5T all are greatly appreciated. Interested in volunteering? Contact Denice at 541-687-8651.

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

WHY DO CATHOLIC BIBLES HAVE SEVENTY-THREE BOOKS?

Baruch is one of seven Old Testament books found in Catholic bibles but not in Protestant ones. Catholics call them the "deuterocanonical" (literally "second canon") books, Protestants call them the "apocryphal" (literally "hidden" - thus "unknown, spurious") books. In addition to Baruch, these books include Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, and Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus).

These deuterocanonical texts were included in the Septuagint, a third-century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament, which served as the scriptures of the apostles and the generations that followed them. The earliest Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament include the deuterocanonical books.

Church councils at Hippo (393) and Carthage (397 and 419) listed these books with the other sixty-six as scripture, endorsing what had become the general belief of the universal Church. The Council of Trent confirmed this canon in the sixteenth century.

How did Protestant Christians lose these books from their bibles? The influential Protestant reformer Martin Luther deleted them. Though he insisted that Scripture must be the sole authority for the Christian faith, when scriptural texts did not support his teaching he denied the authority of those books.

The deuterocanonical books include passages that support the practice of offering prayers and sacrifices for the dead - and by extension, the doctrine of Purgatory. Luther rejected this ancient teaching and practice of the Church, so he denied these books a place in the Protestant canon.

The books of the "second canon" are similar in style to other Old Testament books. Wisdom and Sirach are much like Proverbs. Tobit is in somewhat the same literary category as Job. Judith is comparable to Esther. 1 and 2 Maccabees are like Kings and Chronicles; and Baruch is akin to Jeremiah.

The New Testament closely reflects the thought of the deuterocanonical books in many passages. For example, Revelation 1:4 and 8:3-4 appear to make reference to Tobit 12:15. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:29, seems to have 2 Maccabees in mind, and Hebrews 11:35 mirrors the thought of 2 Maccabees 7:29.