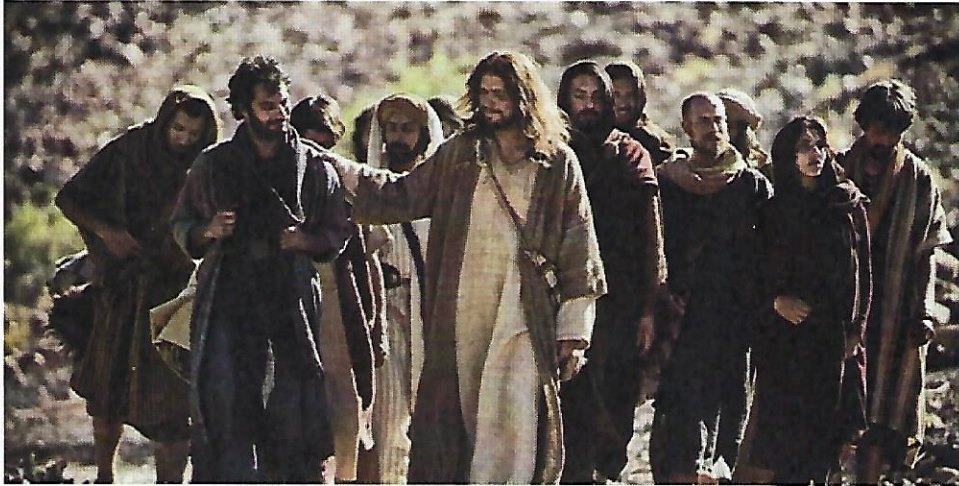


February 17, 2019

Sixth Week in Ordinary Time



Readings for the week of February 17, 2019

Sunday: Jer 17:5-8/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4, 4, 6 [40:5a]/1 Cor 15:12, 16-20/Lk 6:17, 20-26

Monday: Gn 4:1-15, 25/Ps 50:1 and 8, 16bc-17, 20-21 [14a]/Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday: Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Ps 29:1a and 2, 3ac-4, 3b and 9c-10 [11b]/Mk 8:14-21

Wednesday: Gn 8:6-13, 20-22/Ps 116:12-13, 14-15, 18-19 [17a]/Mk 8:22-26

Thursday: Gn 9:1-13/Ps 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 and 22-23 [20b]/Mk 8:27-33

Friday: 1 Pt 5:1-4/Ps 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6 [1]/Mt 16:13-19

Saturday: Heb 11:1-7/Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11 [cf. 1]/Mk 9:2-13

Next Sunday: 1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13 [8a]/1 Cor 15:45-49/Lk 6:27-38

“Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground”

Level Ground

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Luke 6:17, 20-26-February 17, 2019

As I read and reflected on this week's gospel, I was taken by two words. Level ground. There is an advantage to level ground. Sure-footing, stability, balance and a sense of equality are images that come to my mind. I'm not sure that these two little words are that significant for this week's teaching, but they caught my attention and connected a number of dots for me.

In this sixth chapter from the gospel of Luke, Jesus has called disciples, cured two people, answered questions about fasting and sabbath and now has ascended the mountain to pray, a place synonymous with the presence and power of God. While on the mountain he calls his disciples and chooses twelve.

Then from this week's reading **"he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground."** These words, this phrase, really spoke to me. Here we have Jesus, the son of God on the mountain in prayer with God and he descends the mountain to stand on a level place with us. Jesus has brought God to humanity in a personal and powerful way. God is truly available to humanity.

With this truth, Jesus also brings the leveling order of how life really is for all of us. **"Blessed are you who are now poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours."** Excuse my but... What? Wait, aren't the poor the last in any kingdom? Isn't the poor the part of society that just haven't been able to make it? And isn't that their fault? No, the leveling of this old order is fading away with Jesus' new teaching.

Jesus has re-written the order of living to a level of equality and justice. Those most blessed are those most in need, those who are poor, hungry, weeping, hated, excluded and insulted. They are the ones in most need of God's loving care. And if, they recognize and understand God's presence, in the midst of their suffering and injustice then they will also understand that God will change their status.

Then Jesus says that if some choose to ignore the presence and the influence of God in their lives, then they need to be prepared for what is to come. For being rich is only the consolation of this time and this life. It is not eternal. It is temporal, finite and limited. If one does not acknowledge the power and presence of God in the successes of life, and most importantly, refuses to share those successes with others and the world, then woe to them for God surely will judge us all on level ground.

Blessings!


Sue Schettler