Sermon November 1, 2026

Matthew 5:1-12

The teaching of Christ: Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Let us pray: Holy God, as we stand among the great cloud of witnesses, quiet our hearts and open our ears. Let the lives of the saints inspire courage in us, and let Your Spirit speak a fresh word that guides our steps in love. Amen.

Seeking the Promised Land

Graveyards have always fascinated me. When I was a child, my family drove to the old family homestead in Three Notch Alabama. My Great Aunt Sara took us to the family graveyard. As we walked through it, looking at the

names and dates, I tried to imagine the lives represented there. Aunt Sara told me the stories of some of my ancestors, but many of their stories were lost to time. As I looked at the names, birthdates and death dates, I realized they don't tell you much. The lives lived are all condensed into the little dash between the dates.

So much happens within that dash. The first breath and the last… scrapped knees and broken hearts… first dances and last kisses… and all the normal days in-between. No matter how long or short a life may be, a lot is embedded in that dash. These are lives filled with love.

And so we remember.

Today we remember those we have lost in the past year. Each name represents someone that at least one of us loved. Each one changed the world… not because they were powerful but because they are loved by family and friends… loved by God.

And as we remember those lost this year… our hearts reach back and remembers those lost in years past. The stories and memories stored in out hearts. Reminding us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses… the saints that lift us up and surround us. A vast community of love.

Dorothy Day is one of the saints that inspires me. The postscript of her autobiography *The Long Loneliness,* was adapted as a poem. Before I read it to you please note that Peter Maurin was Day's collaborator; together they co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement. That movement was founded in 1933, devoted to living out Gospel teachings through voluntary poverty, pacifism, and "houses of hospitality" for the impoverished and marginalized.

I invite you to listen to her words:

We were just sitting there talking
when Peter Maurin came in.

We were just sitting there talking
when lines of people began to form,
saying, "We need bread."
We could not say, "Go, be thou filled."
If there were six small loaves

and a few fishes, we had to divide them.
There was always bread.

We were just sitting there talking
and people moved in on us.
Let those who can take it, take it.
Some moved out and that
made room for more.
And somehow the walls expanded.

We were just sitting there talking
and someone said, "Let's all go live on a farm."

It was as casual as all that, I often think.
It just came about. It just happened…

It is not always easy to be joyful,
to keep in mind the duty of delight.

The most significant thing
about The Catholic Worker
is poverty, some say.

The most significant thing
is community, others say.
We are not alone anymore.

But the final word is love.
At times it has been,
in the words of Father Zossima,
a harsh and dreadful thing,
and our very faith in love
has been tried through fire.

We cannot love God
unless we love each other,
and to love we must know each other.
We know him in the breaking of bread,
and we are not alone any more.
Heaven is a banquet

and life is a banquet, too,
even with a crust,
where there is companionship.

We have all known the long loneliness
and we have learned that the only solution
is love and that love comes with community.

It all happened while we sat there talking,
and it is still going on.