

## **SAMPLE HOMILIES FOR WORLD MARRIAGE DAY 2008**

### **Sample Homily for Sunday, February 3, 2008** **Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading: Zephaniah 2:3, 3: 12-13.

Second Reading: I Corinthians 1: 26-31

Gospel: Matthew 5: 1-12a.

Sample Homily by Father Doug Reed

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time and World Marriage Day. The Gospel today reminds us of the many blessings our Lord Jesus Christ has given to those who follow him. These Be-attitudes are the beginning of the discourse of Jesus which has come down to us as the "Sermon on the Mount."

Imagine Jesus sitting on a rock on a mountain side, surrounded by the crowds who came to hear him preach, and his disciples gathered around him. He looks out over the crowd and sees deep into their hearts. He knows their attitudes and their actions. He sees some who are poor in spirit, or who are mourning. He sees others who are meek or hunger for righteousness. He also sees those who are merciful, clean of heart, or peacemakers. He also recognizes those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. He wants to comfort and encourage them. He senses their goodness and their needs. His words bring the awareness of God's blessings to his hearers.

In the crowd there are young and old men and women, single and married, and widows and widowers. Jesus knows their hunger to be better sons and daughters of his Father. They have come to hear Jesus speak about God's love for them. But, they hear Jesus talking about themselves, like he knows them intimately. By sharing with them their inmost thoughts, he has revealed to them that God is their companion on their journey. He walks with them and dwells within them. He is not only their God, but their friend. Ultimately they will understand that he is also their Father.

I wonder how many couples and their families had come in search of Jesus? What was their experience in hearing his words of blessing? And how much are we like them when we come here to Church each week? How do we hunger to be better sons and daughters of the Father? How aware of his blessings upon our families and our relationships are we?

As Jesus looked out over the crowd and saw their goodness. I look out over this congregation and know your needs are similar to their needs and your blessings are similar to the blessings Jesus assured them were theirs. We gather here to meet Jesus in his Word, in his Sacraments, and in each other. We experience his love and accept his blessings. Especially today as we honor those in our congregation who have chosen to be married and live in a relationship that mirrors the love of the Trinity.

We believe that on the day of your marriage God gave to you the graces and blessings that you needed to successfully meet the situations Jesus saw in the hearts and lives of the crowd who gathered around him. You have been given the graces and blessings to change hard and difficult situations into blessed events. God has given you the graces to rise up to face trauma in your lives and to look for and find your God in the midst of turmoil. He has taught you how to forgive and how to accept forgiveness. He has shown you how to not only raise up yourselves but also others, your daughters and sons, your family members, and those whom you love or even find difficult to love.

This Wednesday we begin another season of Lent. We take the time during lent to practice the spiritual exercises which characterize our journey with one another to build the kingdom of God in our midst. The Be-attitudes are the fruit of these actions. During Lent we are called to be a people of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We encourage our families to enter into these works of Lent, and our married couples to continue to set the example for these works to be lived in the family setting.

I suggest that we all stop for a few moments today to reflect upon the blessings God has given us. But especially let us bless those who are married among us, and ask for God's choicest blessings to be upon their families. May they become walking Be-attitudes. May those who know them, see breathing, and living Be-attitudes. May the couples who are here today or who are not able to be together find the joy of knowing God's continued embrace. God's blessings are always with you. You are blessed and you are holy in His sight. Do no wrong, and speak no lies. Live blessed lives and you will proclaim those blessings to all who will touch your lives. You are the new remnant of Israel. You are the wise ones spoken of in today's readings who live His words.