



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR A
ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH
JANUARY 31, 2026

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a joy for me to be here with you this evening. I wish to thank Fr. Mark for his kind invitation, and I am happy to welcome my brother Bishops who are with us for this Mass and our gala event later this evening.

Today, the Word of God presents us with two beautiful images of God's people — one from the prophet Zephaniah, a remnant, and the other from Jesus Himself in the Beatitudes, a people who are truly blessed.

In the First Reading, Zephaniah prophesies to a people who had turned from God. Yet amid their corruption and pride, God promises, "I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord-the remnant of Israel."

What a consoling promise this is! God does not abandon His people. Even when nations crumble, when faith grows cold, and when many chase after power or pleasure, God looks for the humble remnant—those who still listen, still trust, still try to live in peace.

These are not the rich or the mighty, nor the ones who place their confidence not in themselves but rather place their hope and trust in God. People whose strength is faith, whose wealth is holiness, and whose security is not found in walls or weapons, but in the Lord who saves. We are called to be "a people humble and lowly" as prophesied by Zephaniah.



In the Gospel, Jesus sits on the mountain and proclaims a vision of life that echoes Zephaniah's prophecy: the Beatitudes. Each Beatitude reveals a paradoxical truth — that true happiness is found not in power, comfort, or success, but in relationship with God and compassion for others.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit...", "Blessed are those who mourn...", "Blessed are the meek...", "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness..." In these words, Jesus sketches the portrait of the humble people Zephaniah foretold. They are the ones who rely on God's mercy, not their own merit. They are not weak, but courageous — living with integrity in a world that often mocks gentleness.

To be "poor in spirit" is to know that without God, we are nothing — yet with God, we have everything. To "mourn" is to feel compassion for the suffering, to let our hearts be moved rather than numb. To "be meek" is not to be passive, but to resist violence, trusting that love is stronger than hate. To "hunger and thirst for righteousness" is to long for God's justice both in society and within our own hearts.

The Beatitudes turn the world upside down. They show us that blessedness is not about comfort, but about communion with God. If you are poor in spirit, you are already open to the Kingdom. If you are merciful, you reflect the very heart of God. If you make peace, you share in Christ's own mission.

It's easy to look at the world and think that the blessed are the wealthy, the influential, the admired. But Jesus says otherwise. The truly blessed may be unnoticed by society — the mother caring quietly for her children; the worker



who acts honestly when no one is watching; the young person who resists peer pressure and chooses what is right. These are the saints of everyday life, the humble remnant of today.

Brothers and sisters, we live in noisy, competitive times. Many measure success by how much you achieve, how much you own, how many people know your name, or by how many followers you have on social media. But Jesus invites us to measure life by how much we love, how much we trust, how much we give away.

To be a Beatitude person — a person of blessing — means allowing Christ's light to shine through our wounds, our losses, our humility. It means being strong enough to forgive, patient enough to listen, brave enough to stand for truth even when it costs us.

This is not easy. The path of the Beatitudes always leads to the Cross — but it also leads to resurrection. "Rejoice and be glad," Jesus says, "for your reward will be great in heaven." The joy He promises those striving to be part of His humble remnant is eternal.

Today, may we hear Zephaniah's prophecy and the Lord's Beatitudes as a call to renewal — to become that humble and faithful remnant in our own time. When we remain faithful to prayer, when we treat others with gentleness, when we hunger for justice and show mercy to those who hurt us, then we become the living sign of God's Kingdom here and now. May we always be counted among the poor in spirit — among those who trust completely in the Lord, who speak the truth, who do no wrong, and who find peace in His presence.



And when others look at us, may they see not pride or power,
but the quiet joy of a humble heart blessed by God.

