

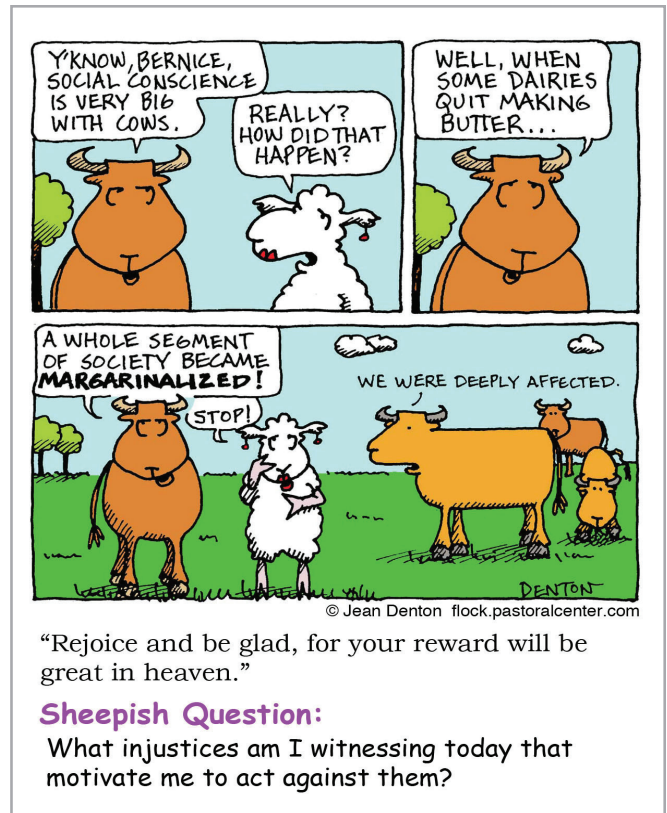
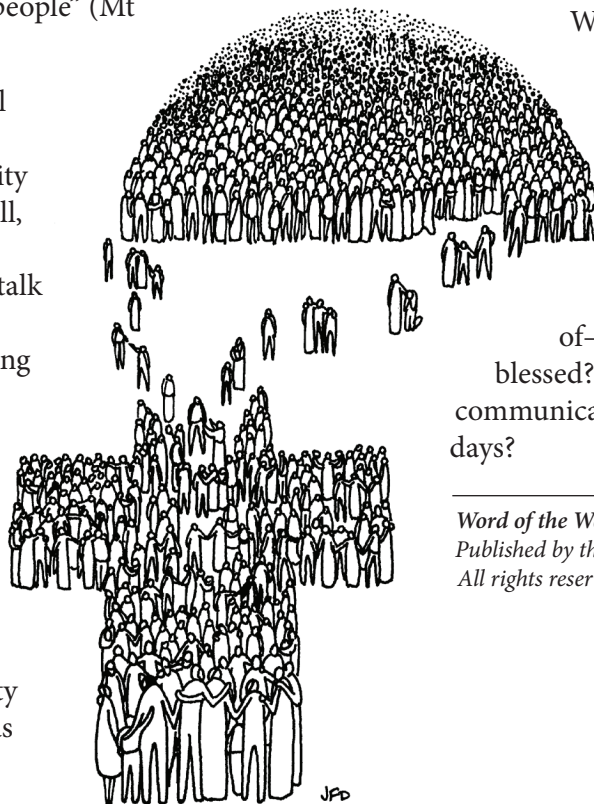
People Who Needed to Hear Good News

This Week's Readings at Mass

- Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13 • Promise for Jerusalem
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 • God chose the lowly
- Matthew 5:1-12 • The Beatitudes

These Beatitudes come at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus went up a mountain and sat down to teach his disciples. Immediately before this passage, Jesus and his new friends had been traveling throughout Galilee, a poor area of the Middle East under the military occupation of the Roman empire and its brutal military. The people there were burdened by high rates of poverty and high taxes. Jews of those days owed *triple* taxes: to Rome, to Herod—the local king, and their religious Temple. They experienced tremendous rates of disease and infant and child mortality. Strict religious codes of the time excluded large segments of the population from day-to-day social interaction (women, children, foreigners, the sick and diseased, etc). Matthew tells us that in their travels Jesus was busily teaching and preaching the good news and “curing every disease and sickness among the people” (Mt 4:23).

Imagine someone leading a small group of students through an extremely impoverished area of a city where homeless, poor, mentally ill, and sick people are everywhere. Imagine that person unafraid to talk to, touch, and interact with such people. Imagine that person having the boldness to tell them that they are loved, that God has not forgotten them, and that they are valuable. *That's* what Jesus had just done when he began teaching the Beatitudes. *That* was the good news he was bringing to people whom the rest of society had forgotten or cast off. *That* was



“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

Sheepish Question:

What injustices am I witnessing today that motivate me to act against them?

the hope he was preaching to others like him who were working for the poor and among the poor.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Which line in the Beatitudes most speaks to you today? Why?
- 2 Who do you know (or know of) who is poor in spirit, mourning, meek, merciful, hungering for justice, etc who needs to hear—or perhaps be reminded of—the good news that they are blessed? Is there some way you can communicate that to them in the coming days?

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