

Topic: Jesus' Public Ministry: Teachings & Miracles

IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and
the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive. From thy bounty, through
Christ our Lord, Amen.”

Guest Speaker

Mr. William Yoho, IHM Deacon

Jesus' Public Ministry Begins

- Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

- Baptism by cousin John the Baptist in the Jordan River. (Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22)
- Holy Spirit's descent; God the Father affirms Jesus as "my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
- Jesus' temptation in the desert. (Mk 1:12-13 ; Mt 4:1-17; Lk 4:1-13)
 - wilderness; 40 days; fasting
 - Theme: Jesus is the "New" Adam & Israel; faithful to God even in the midst of temptation

- John's Gospel

- John is baptizing; descent of Spirit upon Jesus & Voice. (John 1:29-34)
- Ministry begins with Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

Teaching with Power: Miracles in the Synoptics

- Miracle: an unexpected or unexplainable event that shows the power of God
- 4 Types of Miracles:
 - Healing
 - Leper; Paralytic; Hemorrhage
 - Exorcism
 - Possessed man; boy with demon
 - Control of Nature
 - Calming the storm; walking on water
 - Restoration of Life
 - Widow's son; Jairus's daughter



Miracles as Signs: John's Gospel



- Large emphasis on signs (John's word for miracles) which show Jesus as the Son of God
 - Instead of parables, Jesus teaches using signs/miracles and allegories
- Seven Signs (#1, 3, 6, & 7 unique to John)
 - 1=Wedding at Cana (water into wine) (2:1-11)
 - 2=Restores health of official's son (4:46-54)
 - 3=Heals a paralytic (5:2-18)
 - 4=Feeds the 5,000 (6:1-15)
 - 5=Walks on water (6:16-21)
 - 6=Restores sight to man born blind (9:1-7)
 - 7=Raises Lazarus to life (11:1-44)

Jesus' Teachings: The Beatitudes

- 8 blessings/attitudes one is to have in building, living, and being a part of the Kingdom/Reign of God/Heaven
- Contrasting God's Kingdom to the values/attitudes of the Roman Empire & hoped for Jewish State
- Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:3-12)
- Luke's Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:20-23)
- Placing our trust in God as "Abba" (my/our father)
 - Closer to our "Daddy;" a very close and familiar way of addressing God (compare to YHWH & sacredness)

The Beatitudes:

- Blessed are the poor [in spirit], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching Through Parables

- Stories that use metaphors based in daily life to convey religious truths.
- Short, memorable, often containing a “twist.”
- Often told in response to a controversial question or situation.
- Another way of describing & inviting us into the Kingdom of God.
- They often challenge us and our views on life, God, society, and ourselves:
 - Jesus came to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.
 - If his teachings don't challenge us, then either we don't understand his teachings, or we don't understand ourselves.





Parables of the Treasure in the Field & Pearl of Great Price

- Matthew 13:44-46
- Seeking the Kingdom of God with complete devotion; giving our all for such a treasure; even in sacrifice, the Kingdom brings about an attitude of joy.
- What is gained is far outweighed by what is lost or given up.
- Does my faith bring me joy? Are we fully devoted in our pursuit of God?

Parable of the Great Feast

- Luke 14:16-24
- All are welcome (“and still there was room”); especially those most excluded and outcast in this life.
- The challenge is not to miss or turn down the invitation to the banquet, to the Kingdom.
- Who do we exclude and cast out, that Jesus is asking us to welcome?





Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, & Lost Son

- Luke 15
- The extravagant & crazy nonsensical love of God to passionately & persistently pursue us.
- Each story shows a care and concern that outweighs the perceived value of the thing that is “lost.”
- Do we truly believe God loves us *unconditionally*? That we can do nothing to earn God’s love more, or anything to make God love us less?

Story of Jesus & the Rich Man

- Mark 10:17-22
- It's not enough to merely "follow the rules."
- Jesus calls for whole-hearted commitment, making service of God and our neighbor our number one priority.





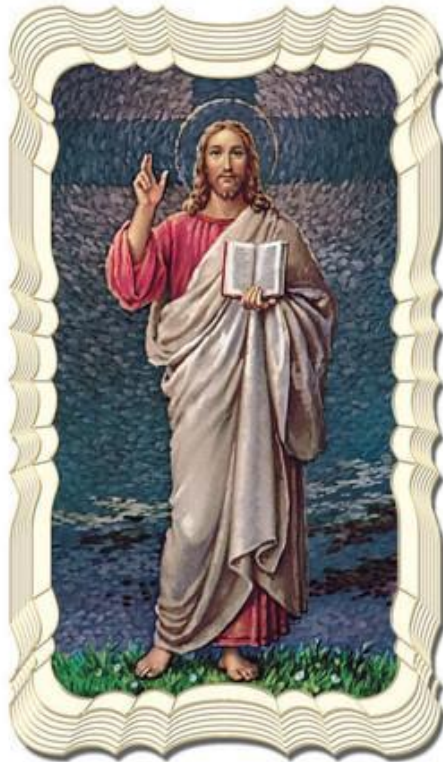
The Greatest Commandment: Matthew 22:34-40

- Of all the commands in the Torah; which is the greatest?
- Jesus combines the two into one:
 - “You shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 - “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18)

Parable of the “Good” Samaritan

- Luke 10:25-37
- Who then is my neighbor?
- Is it the one like me? My friend, my race, my religion?
- Jesus says that our neighbor encompasses more than those like us, but those we hate, despise, have prejudice towards.
- A true neighbor is one who does what is loving, merciful & just.





THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

1. *I am the Lord your God:
you shall not have strange gods
before Me.*
2. *You shall not take the name of the
Lord your God in vain.*
3. *Remember to keep holy
the Lord's day.*
4. *Honor your father and
your mother.*
5. *You shall not kill.*
6. *You shall not commit adultery.*
7. *You shall not steal.*
8. *You shall not bear false
witness against your neighbor.*
9. *You shall not covet your
neighbor's wife.*
10. *You shall not covet your
neighbor's goods.*

Jesus on the Ten Commandments

- Exodus 20:1-17
- First 3 commandments deal with love of God
- Last 7 commandments deal with love of neighbor
- Jesus affirms the Law, yet calls us to go further, looking at the Spirit, not just letter of the Law (cf. Matthew 5:17-48)

Parable of the Last Judgment

- Matthew 25:31-46
- What is the final test? How will we be judged? According to this, it is on the way we treat the poor and marginalized.
- Parousia=2nd coming of Christ & fullness of God's Kingdom.
- Jesus as the "least of these."
- Calls for solidarity and union with all of our brothers & sisters.



Works of Mercy

- Corporal Works of Mercy (physical needs)

- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Shelter the Homeless
- Clothe the Naked
- Care for the Sick
- Help the Imprisoned
- Bury the Dead

- Spiritual Works of Mercy (emotional/intellectual/spiritual needs)

- Share Knowledge
- Give Advice to Those Who Need it
- Comfort Those Who Suffer
- Forgive Those Who Hurt You
- Correct Those Who Need it
- Praying for the Living & the Dead
- Bear Wrongs Patiently

Discussion Questions

- Please share:
 - What struck you from today's Mass readings?
 - What about Jesus' teachings do you find comforting?
 - What about Jesus' teachings do you find challenging?
 - Which Beatitude or Work of Mercy do you most need to focus on right now?
 - What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?

Closing Prayer: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4)

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done
On Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day
Our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

Amen.