

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Reversing What We Expect** Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday,  
September 10, 2014 8:15 AM **1 Cor 7:25-31; Lk 6:20-26** (People's perception of the planet will be very different, and life, and society, and civilization, and what we are all here for.)

**“For the world in its present form is passing away.”**

Indeed, that's the very **theme of the beatitudes**. The world as we know it, the world as the world experiences it, that is, people, ordinary people, this world is passing away.

Therefore don't take its experiences too seriously—**don't take experiences too seriously**.

You may feel yourself very rich and very blessed. However, if your wealth and if your happiness is something that preoccupies you and you are indifferent to those around you who are suffering, then woe to you. Your consolation is now; well, you are supposed to be sharing your consolation. On the other hand, **“Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours,”** the poor mean those who don't really possess this world. **You cannot fill something already full.** So as another way of saying this is **blessed are you who are empty, for you can be filled with the riches of God**, which is parallel to **“Blessed are you who are hungry,”** especially if you hunger for what the world can't give you, in Matthew's Gospel for righteousness, for holiness, for godliness, for goodness, for what nobody can make, for what nobody can produce, **for what can only come as a gift.** Then blessed are you, you will be satisfied. But woe to you if you are full now and that's satisfying. **If you think that life is about what you can do and what you can produce**, if that's what your life is all about, woe to you; you are going to end up very sad. **You are going to end up very empty.** You are going to end up with nothing.

And then when it comes to people, people's regard of you, again, **Jesus is always reversing what we expect, at least if we are worldly.** So the world, of course, loves fame

and people love to be respected, and to some extent being respected is a natural desire. We actually should be respected. But respect and fame and honor can become, as St. Thomas points out, false gods. When that's the most important thing, that's bad. So **“Blessed are you when people hate you for the sake of the Son of Man.”** That means you have your priorities right. **If God is the most important thing for you, then who cares what other people say.** On the other hand, if you don't really care too much about God, then what people say in your honor is all a waste of words.

And so it is that Jesus tries to alert people to what St. Paul is talking about: this world is passing away. It may not be today. It's not a matter of actually days and months. It's rather a matter of reality. **What people take for reality isn't really real.** And as the kingdom of God takes hold in person after person, one at a time, the unreality of the world will become more obvious. It doesn't mean the planet is not going to still be here. **It means people's perception of the planet will be very different, and life, and society, and civilization, and what we are all here for.**