St Peter Claver SJ | Wednesday 9 September 2020

Today is Wednesday the 9 September, the Feast of St Peter Claver SJ in the 23rd week of Ordinary Time.

Nóirín Ní Riain with the monks of Glenstal Abbey, sings the Beatitudes.

Today’s reading is from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 6:20-26

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:
‘Blessed are you who are poor,
   for yours is the kingdom of God.
‘Blessed are you who are hungry now,
   for you will be filled.
‘Blessed are you who weep now,
   for you will laugh. ‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.
‘But woe to you who are rich,
   for you have received your consolation.
‘Woe to you who are full now,
   for you will be hungry.
‘Woe to you who are laughing now,
   for you will mourn and weep. ‘Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Today is the feast day of St Peter Claver SJ, a missionary and priest who lived during the 17th century. Peter Claver is the patron of human rights in Colombia. In his day, such rights were generally decided by status. There were no such rights afforded the thousands of slaves that Peter ministered to at the Columbian docks, except those rights offered by the Christian call to love. His missionary work, that called the slaves to baptism also included calling the slave traders and owners to their Christian duty. He was a practical, moral and spiritual force for change. Maybe you know this saint? Maybe this is the first time you have heard of his ministry? Consider where his influence is needed today.

In Luke, the Beatitudes of Jesus are not all blessings. They are divided into ‘blessings and woes’. There is the comfort of the blessings for the poor and the hungry and for those who weep. A consolation that we all need at times. Perhaps this is where you are now; calling on the Lord for comfort and welcome? Perhaps you are offered courage by the Lord as you stand up for those less fortunate or suffer criticism for your beliefs?

As you listen to the reading again, try to listen to all of what is being said. Without any sense of judgement or need to make excuses, what feelings or thoughts does this raise for you?

In my prayer, can I give myself to God’s purpose and thank God for the blessings that are given to me?
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.