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† Most Rev. Thomas Wenski  
Bishop of Orlando  
June 28, 2006

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Call to Faith Jesus Christ

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# 2 JESUS

## Model of Wisdom

### WHAT'S the ISSUE?

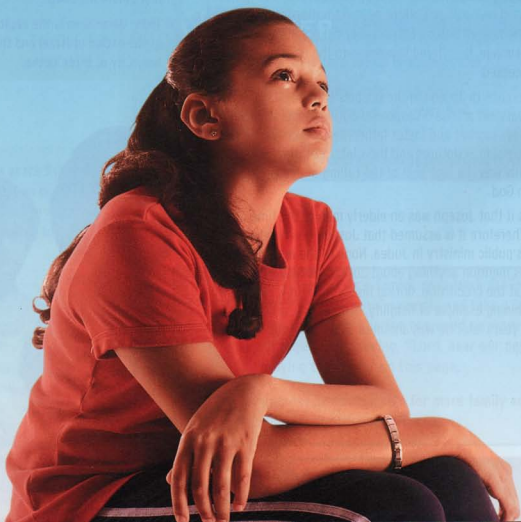
Who should I follow?

There are so many different opinions!

How do I know who to listen to?

**fasci-na-tion** (fās'ə-nā'shən) n.

1. The capability of eliciting intense interest or of being very attractive.
2. The state of being intensely interested or attracted: *listened in fascination.*
3. An intensely interesting, attractive quality or trait.



**S**ome people are fascinating. We want to learn more about them, follow what they do, and listen to what they say. Sometimes we find people in our community and our family fascinating—a personal friend, a school leader, an interesting teacher, or an aunt or uncle with whom we are close. Sometimes, we are fascinated by someone famous, such as a leader or a celebrity.

What does it mean to find someone fascinating? Typically, when someone finds another person fascinating, he or she admires specific qualities or traits. These qualities can be something interesting or intriguing. A person who is fascinating has a style, a way of talking and being that sets them apart. We might want to be like the person we find fascinating, or we might want to have the life and the lifestyle that they have.

Sometimes Jesus spoke in parables when he was being challenged. He did this to trap him. Once a scholar wanted to test Jesus, so he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told a parable of the Good Samaritan.



## WHAT ABOUT IT?

► In your own words, write a definition of fascination.

### WHAT ABOUT YOU?

► Who is someone that you find fascinating? Why do you find that person fascinating?

► What qualities or traits do you look for in a teacher or a leader?

► How do you decide who to follow and who to listen to?



Guide us to know  
your wisdom,  
O Lord.

# WHAT<sup>does</sup> FAITH SAY?

## CONNECT

Sometimes we get to choose our teachers, and sometimes we don't. The people in Jesus' time were fascinated by him and his teachings. Many people left everything to follow him. Today, as people of faith, we are still fascinated by Jesus' life and teachings. Like the disciples, we can turn to Jesus' wisdom and guidance to help us find our way.

## SCRIPTURE

Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God. **John 3:2**

▼ *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836–1902)



# JESUS, THE WISE TEACHER

What made Jesus different from other teachers?

Lots of young people struggle with finding the voice of wisdom in others and themselves: "What really matters? What choices should I make? How am I supposed to live?"

When Jesus started teaching, the people listening to him probably had similar questions: "Who will help us know God's will? Who can make life better?" Jesus gave the answers to these questions, and more!

## A Teacher Like No Other

Once people heard Jesus' words, they realized he was different.

- ▶ Jesus spoke the truth, even when it was difficult to hear.
- ▶ He encouraged people to follow the ways of God his Father, even when it wasn't easy.
- ▶ He spoke across social barriers.
- ▶ He astounded the crowds with amazing authority given to him by his Father.

Jesus' wisdom challenged the commonly accepted understanding of his time. He did not accept stereotypes. He ignored established practices that judged others by their social or economic status. He spent time with women, children, people who had undesirable jobs, and those who were poor, sick, or in special need. Jesus took the time to get to know those most ignored in society. In all of these ways, he valued the worth and dignity of every person he met.



## Ordinary Life, Extraordinary Meaning

Jesus knew things were not perfect. The people needed to turn to God and to work on their relationships with one another. They needed forgiveness.

Those who heard Jesus sensed that he was different. He seemed to be connected to what was important in life and was truly right. He encouraged people to do good, even if it required them to change their way of living.

Jesus wanted his followers to understand the true meaning of forgiveness and the way to live by God the Father's will. He spoke often about God's kingdom of peace and justice. Jesus talked about things that were difficult to define. So he often taught using parables.

A **parable** is a simple story or an analogy used to describe something larger or more mysterious. Jesus' parables sometimes end with a twist or a surprise. He talked about things from the everyday lives of his listeners—such as farming, cleaning, cooking, fishing, family relationships—to give a religious or moral lesson, or to emphasize God's great love.

Sometimes Jesus spoke in parables when he was being challenged by a religious leader who wanted to trap him. Once a scholar wanted to test Jesus, so he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable would have surprised Jesus' listeners. The Jewish people and the Samaritans of Jesus' time had religious and ethnic differences. The people would not have expected the Jewish men to ignore one of their own or the Samaritan to help someone considered to be the enemy. (See *Luke 10:25–37*.)

## CHECK THIS OUT!

You can find more than thirty parables in the Gospels. The parables can be grouped into different themes or categories.

**kingdom parables**, such as the Pearl of Great Price (*Matthew 13:45–46*)

**forgiveness parables**, such as the Lost Coin (*Luke 15:8–10*)



**parables about making choices**, such as the Two Sons (*Matthew 21:28–32*)

**parables that upset the order of things**, such as the Rich Man and Lazarus (*Luke 16:19–31*)

**discipleship parables**, such as the Wedding Feast (*Matthew 22:1–14*)



## Faith Walk

Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.

Mark 4:1

When Jesus spoke, he attracted crowds of people who stayed to listen to him teach. Sometimes they stayed for days at a time. People were astonished by his words and his life. Many changed their lives because of him and dedicated themselves to following him and living by his teachings.

*What was Jesus like as a teacher?*

*What made people follow him?*

*What does it mean to follow him today?*

## Next Step

# A UNIQUE MESSAGE

How are Jesus' words surprising and challenging?

## SCRIPTURE

### GO TO THE SOURCE

Read **Matthew 7:24–29** and think about why this analogy ended the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus taught everywhere he went. He preached in homes and synagogues, in boats, on the road as he walked, and on the shores. He gathered with his disciples on hilly areas as the crowds followed him, hoping to hear his message or to receive his healing touch. He offered many words of wisdom throughout his public ministry, and the author of the Gospel of Matthew collected many of these teachings into what is known as the **Sermon on the Mount**.

## Words and Actions

Have you ever been told that actions speak louder than words? Or that you need to not only say what's right, but also do what's right? Jesus tells us something similar.

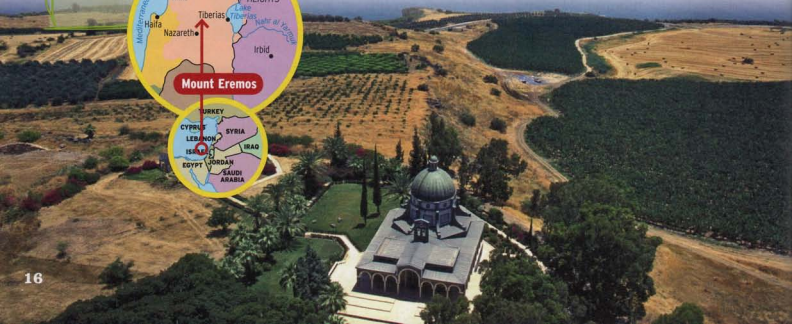
**SCRIPTURE** Jesus said if you listen to his words, and you pattern your actions on his words, you will have a good foundation. It's like building a house on solid rock. The winds will blow, and the rains will fall, but the house will stand. The strong foundation of Jesus' words will hold up your actions that are based on hearing and believing his words.

But if you don't listen to the words of Jesus, it will be like building your house on sand. Your life will have no foundation. The winds and rain will knock it down easily. (See *Matthew 7:24–29*.)

## WHERE IT HAPPENED



THE GOSPELS do not tell us exactly where Jesus gathered his disciples and the crowds in Galilee. The geography in the hill country of Galilee contains elevated hills with many associated level places. Some archeologists and people who study the Bible think parts of the Sermon on the Mount took place at Mount Eremos, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. It is often called the Mount of Beatitudes.



## ((( Sound Bytes from the Mount )))

You are the salt of the earth.  
You are the light of the world.



Where your treasure is, your heart is, too!

Don't judge others harshly, or you  
will be judged harshly.

Our Father is in heaven;  
how holy is his name.

When you pray,  
don't use loud and  
fancy words.



When you give to the poor,  
don't brag about it.

When you fast, don't try  
to look glum and hungry.

Ask and you will receive.  
Seek and you will find.  
Knock and the door will open.



Love your enemies.



Which of these teachings do you think people most need to hear and act on today?



Which teachings would be hardest for you to hear and act on?



### CONNECT YOUR FAITH

Name three words or phrases to describe Jesus' wisdom found in the Sermon on the Mount.

# DIVINE WORDS FOR WISE LIVING

What do the Beatitudes teach us about our relationships with God and others?

## SCRIPTURE

### GO TO THE SOURCE

Read either **Matthew's** or **Luke's** version of the Beatitudes to find out how each of these groups of people will be blessed.

Perhaps the most often quoted part of the Sermon on the Mount is the **Beatitudes**, Jesus' teachings on the meaning of and path to true happiness. The word *beatitude* means, "happiness" or "blessedness." In the Beatitudes Jesus tells how he expects his followers to live in relationship with one another. In the Beatitudes we find the values of the kingdom of God, and the attitudes and behaviors of Christians living in God's kingdom today. From the Beatitudes we learn about the eternal blessedness, or holiness, to which God calls all of us.

The Beatitudes are recorded in two Gospels: Matthew and Luke. The two versions are similar, but different.

## SCRIPTURE

### The Words in Matthew 5:3-12

Blessed are:

- the poor in spirit
- those who mourn and the meek
- those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
- the merciful and the pure in heart
- the peacemakers
- those persecuted for righteousness
- you when people revile you because of Jesus

### The Words in Luke 6:20-26

Blessed are you:

- who are poor
- who are hungry now
- who weep now
- when people hate you on account of the Son of man

Woe to you:

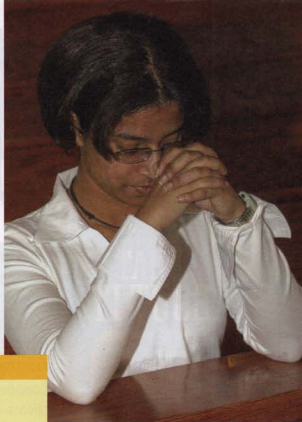
- who are rich
- who are full now
- who are laughing now





## The Message

Matthew's version zeroes in on the spiritual and religious virtues of God's kingdom. Luke's version focuses on the social and economic inequality of the time. In both, we find Jesus' teaching that happiness comes from trusting in God no matter what is happening now. We will know true happiness when God's kingdom has come in its fullness. In the meantime, being obsessed with material things or current good fortune will keep us from seeing and living the real values of God's kingdom.



## Faith Walk

*"You can never be too rich, too pretty, or too skinny."*

*"When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping."*

*"The one who dies with the most toys, wins!"*

These bumper stickers are intended to be funny, but they also share messages that many people believe about who should be happy and why. As people of faith, we have a different plan for happiness. In the Beatitudes, Jesus describes people who live according to God's ways as "blessed," meaning that they are blessed by God and that they are happy living according to God's plan.

According to messages in magazines, songs, TV, movies, and advertisements, who should be happy and why? Name two or three ideas.

From reading the Beatitudes listed on the previous page, who does Jesus describe as happy and why? Name two or three ideas.

Think about Jesus' plan for happiness when you hear or read messages that describe happiness as being about money, physical attractiveness, or power.

**What can you do to learn more about God's plan for your happiness?**

**What can you do now to live by God's plan?**

## Next Step

## CATHOLICS BELIEVE

**As Catholics we turn to Jesus as our source of wisdom.**

- ▶ Jesus' wisdom came from being the Son of God; he looked at the world and those around him through divine eyes, not society's values.

- ▶ He taught through his words and actions. In his Sermon on the Mount, he gave advice and specific directions that emphasize just living, honoring God, and making our actions reflect our beliefs.
- ▶ Jesus' Beatitudes challenge us to live by the values of God's kingdom and to understand that true happiness comes from the hope of eternal life with God.

# WHAT NOW?

## LIVE OUR FAITH

- ★ Take the time to learn Jesus' teachings.
- ★ Use Jesus' values to help you make good choices.
- ★ Take time to pray for guidance when making decisions.
- ★ Search out wise people to get to know.

## WHAT ABOUT IT?

### WHAT About YOU?

How will you learn more about Jesus' wisdom? Consider ways to learn from people of faith, participate in your parish, learn from Scripture, and seek guidance from prayer. Write one thing you will try this week (and do it!).

Think of someone you admire as a person of wisdom. Consider: a family member, someone from your parish, a teacher, a coach, a celebrity, a historical figure, or a political figure.

Write the name of this person below. What are the qualities of this person of wisdom? Write three or four words or phrases that describe him or her.

Consider Jesus as a person of wisdom. What words would you choose to describe Jesus?

Words that describe

Words that describe Jesus



## PRAYER

Loving Father,  
You gave us Jesus, your Son, to show us the way.  
Help us to know his teachings in our heart and live his teachings in our lives.  
Guide us to follow your plan for happiness.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## FAITH at HOME

Read the "Catholics Believe" summary on page 19 together. Share some ways that Jesus' wisdom makes a difference in your life. Pray the Our Father together to conclude your conversation.



Visit [www.osvcurriculum.com](http://www.osvcurriculum.com) for more family and community connections.

# Oscar Romero

He wasn't much of a hero. He didn't like to cause any problems. He was really kind of ordinary. No one thought he'd ever do anything unusual.

In 1977, he became the archbishop of San Salvador. His name was Oscar Romero.

San Salvador (it means "Holy Savior") is in the country of El Salvador (it means "The Savior"). It truly seemed like a city, and a country, in need of our Savior.

There was a lot of violence in El Salvador. Death squads would come in, capture, and kidnap family members. Often brothers, fathers, sons, and husbands would never be seen again. Those who were poor had no power at all. They couldn't stop the military. Anyone who tried to protect the poor was in danger of being killed.

At first, Archbishop Romero tried to avoid the issue. He tried to pretend it wasn't as bad as it was. He didn't want to make any waves. He didn't want to upset the other bishops, either.

The death of a close friend who had worked for social justice was the tipping point for Oscar Romero. He had a change of heart. This timid, quiet man became fearless and outspoken. He insisted that the Church must serve those who were poor and must stand against the violence. He brought Jesus' Beatitude living to life. He took "Blessed are the poor" to heart. He placed the values of the kingdom above those of the government, working for justice and the needs of those who could not protect themselves.

He knew his own life was in danger because he was becoming famous for speaking out against the government and supporting people who were poor. He told the people, "I have frequently been threatened with death . . . if they kill me, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people."

On March 23, 1980, he called upon the soldiers, begging them to refuse to follow orders to kill: "We are your people. The peasants you kill are your own brothers and sisters. When you hear the voice of the man commanding you to kill, remember instead the voice of God. 'You shall not kill!' . . . in the name of God, in the name of our tormented people whose cries rise up to heaven, I beseech you, I beg you, I command you, Stop the violence!"

The very next day, while saying Mass, he was shot and killed.

The people of El Salvador, and all of Latin America, claim him as their saint and martyr.



## Global Data

- El Salvador is located in Central America on the Pacific coast.
- El Salvador is almost the size of the state of Massachusetts.
- El Salvador has a population of over six million people, more than 57.1 percent of them Catholic.
- On August 6, the country celebrates the feast day of El Salvador del Mundo (Savior of the World). San Salvador celebrates with carnivals, fairs, soccer games, and a procession.

