4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 29, 2017

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Psalm 146

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Matthew 5:1-12a

What I am going to say to you is dangerous. Please don’t repeat it to anyone.

Let me look at our psalm today – Psalm 146, and give you my take.

The Lord keeps faith forever. No He doesn’t. Faith is believing in what is unseen. God sees all. He has no need of faith.

…Secures justice for the oppressed. No He doesn’t. There are people oppressed in this country and around the world.

…Gives food for the hungry. No He doesn’t. Millions of children in this country go hungry each and every night.

…Sets captives free. No He doesn’t. For instance, you and I know people who are held captive by all sorts of addictions.

The Lord gives sight to the blind. No He doesn’t. There are people blind to the ills of this world.

…The Lord raises up those who were bowed down. No He doesn’t. We have people who are struggling with depression in our own families.

The Lord loves the just. He sure has a strange way of showing it.

…The Lord protects strangers. A visitor from Japan recently was assaulted in Niagara Falls.

The fatherless and the widow the Lord sustains. No He doesn’t. Orphans and widows are the least protected by our society.

…but the way of the wicked he thwarts. No He doesn’t. Evil people are as powerful as ever – here and around the world.

The Lord shall reign forever. Sure He does. Yet His kingship does not hold sway over all the world.

…your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia. He must have skipped a few generations. Not everyone believes in God.

But who does? The remnant, a people humble and lowly. Not many of whom are wise by human standards, not many are powerful, not many of noble birth.

That describes us, I guess. God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something.

And Jesus, the Son of God, teaches us to place ourselves smack dab in the middle of his beatitudes which he taught to his disciples.

The poor in spirit will be blessed if we alleviate powerlessness, poverty and depression.

Those who mourn will be blessed if we console them with Godly hope.

The meek will be blessed if we make it clear that all the resources of the earth that are considered fundamental to life will be available to all.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will have their fill if we ensure justice for all.

If we show mercy, mercy will be ours.

If we are clean of heart and rid ourselves of selfishness and pornography in all its forms and subterfuge and scandal, we shall see God.

If we strive for peace in our hearts, in our families, in our communities, in our country, in our world, we can consider ourselves children of God.

 If anyone is persecuted because he or she is a child of God, we must defend them.

And if we follow the discipline of Jesus Christ, we will be persecuted in some form or another, but relax, God sees and hears and rewards.

So if we are children of God and God is in us, we secure justice, give food, set captives free, give sight to the blind, raise up those who are bowed down, love the just, protect strangers, sustain the fatherless and the widows, thwart evil, and the Lord shall reign for we are the Lord’s and the Lord acts through us through all generations, Alleluia.