



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

March 26, 2023

“The World’s Happiest Nation?”

*How satisfied are you with your life? Do you have access to quality healthcare? How often do you use the internet or a mobile phone?
(from the Gallup World Happiness Poll)*

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
(from Matthew 5, The Sermon on the Mount)*

“The Happiest Nation?”

Finland is the world’s happiest country, according to World Happiness Report rankings from the 2023 Gallup World Poll. (the United States is 15th) When we look at these questions from the survey and the Sermon on the Mount side-by-side, are we comparing different things...apples and oranges? If so, how do we reconcile these...or can we?

Is there reconciliation?

Reconciliation requires recognizing that both external and internal factors contribute to happiness and understanding the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. While material prosperity, social support, and freedom can enhance well-being, they may not bring lasting happiness. We also need the internal qualities taught by Christianity, such as gratitude, compassion, and faith, which can provide deeper and more enduring sources of happiness. These inner qualities cultivate and nurture supportive and peaceful social relationships and contribute to a more just and sustainable world. St. Paul shares this wisdom:

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 14:17)

The Outcome of a Reflective Lent?

By using Lent as a time to reflect on Christian beliefs we can strengthen our foundation for an eternal form of happiness based on the Good News of the Kingdom that embraces both external and internal, individual and communal values...it’s worth reading Matthew 5 again!

(for more on the Gallup Poll see

[https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/world-happiest-countries-2023-wellness.](https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/world-happiest-countries-2023-wellness))

Prayer Box

Let’s keep in our prayers healing for Mark, Bill, Gloria, and Lucy; support for Joyce; comfort for Andy and Ronan and his family. Lord, hear our prayer!

Gospel Reading for the week of March 26: Matthew 9:9-13, 35-38.

“The Call of Matthew and Laborers for the Harvest”

The Message of This Reading:

Matthew 9:9-13 tells the story of Jesus calling Matthew, a tax collector, to be his disciple. Matthew 9:35-38 gives us more insight into the motivation of Jesus’s call.

These passages emphasize Jesus's mission to reach out to those who have strayed from God and to heal and show mercy and compassion to those who are marginalized and outcast.

The outcasts in Jesus' time were prostitutes, diseased people, lepers, people who didn't believe in the main religion, tax collectors, and people that were ritually unclean. We read many stories about how Jesus showed compassion for and welcomed people from all these shunned groups, while proclaiming the good news of God’s kingdom.

Marginalized individuals and groups exist today as well. Lent is a time to us to assess how we can reach out to the outcasts of our times.

