

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

Matthew 5:1–12

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

By Father Daniel Mafla

Dear San Paul's community:

Today I invite you to reflect on the message of Jesus and what it means to **turn our lives toward God**, that is, to change our way of living so we can be closer to Him. This change is not an obligation or something sad; it is a joyful path. Jesus invites us to open our hearts to His love and to live in a new way.

The Beatitudes show us this path and teach us that true happiness is not found in having everything, but in living with simplicity, mercy, justice, and a heart open to others.

The evangelist Matthew tells us that Jesus began His public ministry after John the Baptist. Jesus preached in Galilee, a place where many roads crossed and many people met. Matthew describes that community as a people living in darkness: there was injustice, suffering, and pain; life was not as God desired it to be. But in the middle of that darkness, Jesus appears as a great light. And His message is simple: "Repent." Jesus invites us not to remain in darkness, but to walk toward the light and allow God to transform our lives.

Today, with the baptism of Liam, we remember that all of us have a covenant with God. Baptism reminds us who we are and what we are called to be. Thank you, Leam, for helping us return to our roots and renew our Christian commitment.

Many times we think that conversion is only for those who have made serious mistakes. But Jesus speaks to all of us.

He invites us to live differently: to be more compassionate, to respect the dignity of every person, and to help heal what causes pain and suffering.

Conversion means allowing ourselves to be found by God, learning to care for the lives of others, and working for a more just and humane world. It is not only about doing good things, but about returning to the God who has always been good to us.

Conversion is a joyful process. It means clearing our minds of selfishness, freeing our hearts from worries that take away our peace, and letting go of things we do not need so we can live for the people who truly need us. When we hear Jesus' invitation, let us remember that it is never too late to love, never too late to be happier, and never too late to allow God to forgive us and renew us.

However, we live in a time when many people isolate themselves. They place a "do not disturb" sign on the door of their lives, not only on their homes but also on their hearts. Sometimes we prefer

not to look, not to listen, and not to get involved so we do not complicate our lives or feel the pain of others. Modern life, with its speed and technology, trains us to live at a distance. We see suffering reduced to numbers or images on a screen, and little by little we become indifferent.

This “do not disturb” mindset makes us believe that pain belongs to others and that it is not our responsibility. We close the door to protect ourselves, but in doing so we also lock ourselves in, become isolated, and lose the joy of sharing life with others. In contrast, the Beatitudes invite us to live differently. Jesus calls us to remove that “do not disturb” sign and open the door of our hearts. He reminds us that happiness is not found in avoiding pain, but in drawing close with love; not in indifference, but in being merciful, humble, and peacemakers.

Dear community, today Jesus invites us to look at the sign we have placed on the door of our lives. Perhaps, without realizing it, we have written “do not disturb” out of fear, exhaustion, or indifference. But the Gospel calls us to take that sign down and open our hearts. Conversion means daring to live with the door open, allowing ourselves to be touched by the lives of others, and letting God change the way we see and act.

The Beatitudes remind us that true happiness is born when we are simple, merciful, and builders of peace. They teach us that God is close to those who suffer, and that we are also called to be close. Let us ask the Lord to

help us walk toward the light, to live our faith with joy, and to be a community that does not close itself off, but instead welcomes, accompanies, and shares the hope that God gives us each day.