

*Blessed are...*

*Living the Beatitudes*

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## FOREWORD

**Blessed Are...Living the Beatitudes** is designed to challenge people to make the Beatitudes, a way of life.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used parables to teach and demonstrate how to apply the Eight Beatitudes to daily life. These reflections are designed to further connect Christ's intent during His life on Earth by giving modern day parables for us now.

There are five reflections for each of the Eight Beatitudes. The first reflection is a stained glass rendering of the Beatitude, and the stained-glass artist's reflection. This reflection is followed by four additional reflections for a total of 40 reflections.

As you begin each reflection, place yourself in Jesus' presence. **Ask Jesus to teach you now as He taught then so you too can be an instrument of His peace.**

**Susie Pace and Bob Harrison, Co-editors**  
**Summer 2020**



The Beatitudes stained glass windows used in the divider pages are from Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Seward, Nebraska. For more information, the church website is:

<http://www2.connectseward.org/chu/stv/index.htm>

The back cover is a stock image stained glass from Shutterstock of the Sermon on the Mount.

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# THE BEATITUDES



BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT,  
FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN,  
FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK,  
FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST  
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
FOR THEY WILL BE SATISFIED.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL,  
FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY.

BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART,  
FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY  
WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE PERSECUTED  
FOR THE SAKE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

*Matthew 5:3-10*



## Beatitude 1 Reflection 1



**Blessed are the poor in spirit —**

The Crown and Scepter symbolize the Kingdom of Heaven; the dove the Holy Spirit; the hand reaching from the flower symbolizes humility.

## **Poor in Spirit - Beatitude One - Reflection 2**

“May a secret Providence embrace your spirit”- O’Donohue, 2008

### **Reflection**

The Beatitudes of Jesus (Latin, ‘ beatus’, "blessed") affirm that certain people are blessed by God. The Greek “God blesses” is makarios, meaning "happy." Jesus' point is that certain kinds of people experience life's goodness and joy because of their connection to heaven. Poor in spirit reminds me that Providence spirituality is one of happiness and abundance; having what we need. I’m in WV where we are all ‘kin’. This beatitude connects reliance on God with loving all as ‘kin’.

Jesus affirms as blessed those we ordinarily do NOT think of as happy. Jesus turns life upside down, inviting us into a new way of being in the world. COVID world and isolation evoke a feeling of spiritual poverty and many of us are challenged to be ‘happy’ with God’s call to us at this time.

God’s call is to realize our need for God. To be aware. To recognize that our hearts are happiest in God’s presence. COVID calls us to prioritize in this cloister of our masked world. We are called to be a ‘blessing people’, poor together, happy together, and together in loving ‘kin-dom’

### **Living the Beatitude**

1. Contact one emotionally isolated person to bless them as ‘kin’.
2. Bless yourself; affirm that ‘I have enough’ for today.
3. Relax your body aware that God is your first priority and fills your need.

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## Poor in Spirit - Beatitude One – Reflection 3

“True Freedom”

### Reflection

Recently, I went on YouTube and found the title song to the 1969 musical, *Hair*. I did so because during this time of Covid 19, I’ve had to strategize how to safely get a haircut. On that particular day, I felt desperately in need.

But it wasn’t that I was desperately in need of a haircut, rather in desperate need of hope. *Hair* is about hope for a new age of freedom.

In learning about St. Ignatius of Loyola, who developed the Spiritual Exercises and Rules for Discernment, I’ve come to understand freedom in a new way. Ignatius calls us to work for interior freedom.

While *Hair* offers a vision of hope, the vision is clouded by drugs. The vision of Ignatius’ teaching is deeper clarity about living in this world.

In these days when there is so much to cloud our vision, we are called to awareness so that we can clearly see the true freedom that Christ offers us every day and use that freedom to work toward justice and peace.

### Living the Beatitude

Before you go to bed tonight, consider in an examination of conscience what has clouded your vision today. What do you need to do tomorrow to live in Christ’s true freedom?

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## Poor in Spirit - Beatitude One - Reflection 4

### Reflection

Created in God's image, we are welcomed before God with our strengths and limitations. In this first Beatitude, we are accepted for who we are, and there is nothing we can do to earn God's love. It is pure gift with no strings attached. Because we are loved deeply, we are given the grace and tools to imitate this love to others through the Beatitudes.

God's unconditional acceptance allows us to surface our weakness so that we come know ourselves and be known by others. As a younger woman, I wrestled with owning my mistakes and imperfections. There was much shame attached to my worth. I believed that I had to be perfect to be loved and especially from God who was a like a "Catholic Cop in the Sky."

Since 1998, I have worked on my relationship with God and have grown to value the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a loving ritual. There is a deep intimacy of bringing forth my shortcomings and placing any shame outside of myself. I commit to changing and cooperate with others who can help me. Participating in routine spiritual direction and a Conscious Examen, I pay close attention to fear, pride and procrastination, which sneak in to protect the E.G.O. of "Easing God Out" can happen if I am experiencing the compulsion to prove myself competent while working against myself.

### Living the Beatitude

In closing, awareness, acceptance and action are the keys to transformation. We are called to "Live in the Light!" Walking humbly with God is our greatest freedom. Our humility is the light that shines in our darkness.

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## Poor in Spirit – Beatitude One - Reflection 5

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:3

### Reflection

What does it mean to be “**poor in spirit?**” To be “**poor in spirit**” is to be humble, recognize our sinfulness, and to trust in more in God than in the things of the world.

Perhaps we can view our current worldwide pandemic as a God sent “**wake up call**” for us to be “**poor in spirit**”. If we consider blessed a synonym of wealthy, and “**poor in spirit**” those who remain faithful to God in times of difficulty, this is our time to grow and nurture our spiritual wealth through our faith in God.

We are called to place our trust and confidence in God rather than material possessions and worldly power. We are reminded that God extends the “**kingdom of heaven**” to all people who recognize their complete dependence and reliance on God.

### Living the Beatitude

We ask God to grant us the humility and simplicity to put our trust and confidence in God rather than worldly items. We trust that our pandemic is part of God’s plan, and we seek God’s love and mercy as we wear our masks, wash our hands, and keep our social distance.

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## Beatitude 2 Reflection 1



### **Blessed are they that mourn —**

The eagle flying into the sun symbolizes the Resurrection and the Life. The flames represent the Holy Spirit flowing down from the resurrection to comfort the kneeling figure in mourning. The hands with the shovel represent burial. The tearful eye also symbolized mourning.

## **Mourn - Beatitude Two - Reflection 2**

“Those who learn to mourn over their own sin find the heart of God. And intimate fellowship with God is the very foundation of true happiness”.

D. A. Carson

### **Reflection**

In this time of Covid-19, there is so much to mourn for and about, it was difficult choosing one aspect. As I perused the web, I found an interesting answer to the question, “What does ‘blessed are those who mourn’ mean?”

When I think of our nineteen Sisters who have gone home to God in the last two and a half years, it made me think of how blessed they were and how blessed we were to have them in our lives. 2 Corinthians 7:10 states that “The kind of ‘mourning’ that leads to repentance is truly blessed. Those, who mourn over their own sin, find the heart of God. And, intimate fellowship with God is the very foundation of happiness.”

In living in a close relationship with God, our Sisters have always had a desire for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, not because they are great sinners, as one priest said, “Hearing the Sisters confessions is like being pelted by popcorn!” The Sisters wanted to deepen their relationship with their Spouse, Jesus, and live a life of example for the people of God. I am sure that, when they arrived in heaven, our great Comforter was there to meet them in His eternal embrace.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Have you ever thought of living this beatitude in this way?

Pray with it in your prayer.

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## **Mourn - Beatitude Two - Reflection 3**

### **Reflection**

The death of a sister to cancer is a very devastating event that family members too often are experiencing today. Throughout her 5-year battle with cancer, our sister did not want anyone to know about her illness.

After her first 2 years of treatments, she was declared cancer free. This gave our family hope. Then, a year later, we were told the cancer had returned. For the remainder of her life she underwent some form of treatment.

Anyone, who has experienced loved ones going through cancer treatments, knows these treatments wreak havoc within your body. All during this time, she was an absolute rock and demonstrated such spiritual strength to us. Her family members meant everything to her, and she meant everything to them. Together, we shared our pain, powerlessness, and feelings of inadequacy.

As we continue to mourn the loss of our sister, our relief comes from recalling moments that we shared with Francie throughout our lives, and the many words of wisdom she taught us.

Blessed are those who mourn because Jesus will always heal, restore, teach, and guide us through the mourning process. Soak in the compassion of God even when you think you're not deserving, it will transform you. God's love is so extravagant it crushes our brokenness.

### **Living the Beatitude**

- Pray James 1:12B: "Such a one who has stood the test will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."
- Take time to pray for those you love while they are still living.
- Respect, honor and pray for those who have died.

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## **Mourn - Beatitude Two - Reflection 4**

Homonyms-hom·o·nym/'hämə,nim/ *noun*. 1. each of two or more words having the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings and origins-Oxford Dictionaries

### **Reflection:**

“Mourning” and “morning” are two words that are examples of homonyms. Although these two words have different meanings, these two words form the “beginning” and “ending” point in the grieving process.

Be it a parent, partner, pal or pet, everyone will experience the death of someone close to them. As the years go by, this list appears to grow even longer and longer.

Recently, I experienced the death of my mother. At an even younger age, I experienced the death of my father. Mothers tend to be the pillars of strength in a household so I looked to my mother then and now as a role model for the grieving process.

One word that immediately came to mind was “service”. When my father died, my mother increased her levels of service to her family, faith, job and community. My mother was named, “Regina” for the Blessed Mother. She even served others in the spirit of Mary-lovingly, joyously and unconditionally.

Jesus tells us that the mourners will be comforted, and my mother found comfort in service. She was able to move through the mourning process to see the morning of each day beginning with the word service.

### **Living the Beatitude**

- Prayerfully evaluate your levels of service.
- Ask God to show you ways to increase your levels of service to your family, faith, job or community.
- Add one new way to be of service to others today and always.

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## Mourning - Beatitude Two – Reflection 5

### Reflection

We mourn loss, typically of a loved one, who has died, and yet as Christians “...even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” In our loss of one we loved, we give praise and thanks to God, realizing that life itself is a gift from God, a gift intended to make us happy.

So yes, we are blessed as we mourn, recalling as we do the joy and good things of the life just lost. In that blessing, we are comforted. This is not “there, there, it will be OK.” This comfort is the King James Version language with the emphasis on the **fort**: God strengthens us for the days ahead. And, strengthened we praise the God, who made us, redeemed us, and sustains us.

### Living the Beatitude

We are responsible for our own lives, for living them as God would want us to, to be happy, to have all the blessings of all the Beatitudes. To have life and to have it abundantly.

The way to happiness is adhering to the Ten Commandments, what one Presbyterian minister has called “signposts to freedom.” Live life as God wishes us to. Live not for self but for others. And, your life will be a blessing to others so that at the end of your days it may be honestly said “well done thou good and faithful servant.”

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### Beatitude 3 Reflection 1



#### **Blessed are the meek —**

The lamb symbolizes the meek. The water represents the living water. The fish represents Christianity.

## Meek - Beatitude Three - Reflection 2

“Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real”

Thomas Merton

### Reflection

Many people believe the word **“meek”** has a negative connotation. According to Mr. Merriam and Mr. Webster the first known use of **“meek”** occurred in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The word is a Middle English word of Scandinavian origin meaning **“gentle in nature or behavior.”** Other synonyms include **“peaceful, humble, and non-violent.”**

Another explanation of having meekness is realizing we have little control over experiences and events in our lives. A truly humble person accepts this. Since no person controls the universe, the rational choice is to live in gratitude for what is, not yearn for what isn't.

“...(the meek) shall inherit the land.” Of the four factors of production as defined by economists the only category that is able to be **‘inherited’** is the land. Land is defined as not as the ground we walk on, but everything in nature. If a person lives in gratitude, they are able to enjoy the world and each experience without formally **'having their name on the deed.'**

### Living the Beatitude

If one is meek, one is not jealous. Jealousy implies the desire to ‘inherit’ something besides the land, whether it is a promotion at work, the swimming pool your neighbor installed, or the two-month vacation in Italy your cousin is planning to take.

When participating in gossip, one is essentially appropriating another person's story. In fact, it is stealing something that a gentle person, a peaceful person, a meek person cannot inherit. Do not gossip.

## **Meek - Beatitude Three - Reflection 3**

“Inheriting the seeds sown by the meek”

### **Reflection**

Living the Beatitudes daily requires great introspection, especially as we attempt to be meek in the world of 2020. To be meek is to be humble, and gentle, and kind toward others. Those who are meek sow the seeds of patience in place of intolerance, justice in place of prejudice, and love in place of hate as the meek show a gentleness to all. The land the meek inherit depends on all of us! What seeds are we planting for future generations to inherit? What humility and gentleness do we need show to truly be meek so that the land might be filled with the fruits of the Kingdom of God!

### **Living the Beatitude**

- Examine your day, where can you show more meekness in your daily encounters?
- Where is God calling you to show more meekness?

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## **Meek - Beatitude Three - Reflection 4**

“Am I truly totally dependent on God and living my life for Him and others?”

### **Reflection**

To be meek is to be dependent on God for everything and to let His light shine on others through me. I have learned that when I am able to help someone, that's God answering someone else's prayer through me. We should never pass by anyone in need. We may be in the position to be the hand of God for them. Each day we should strive to help someone along on their journey.

It may be as simple as a smile given to the person checking you out at the grocery, helping a neighbor carry bags from their car, or holding a door open for the person behind you. You may need to give an encouraging word to a young parent, or to take the time to sit and really listen to an older person.

Any small gesture can make a huge difference to the person who crosses your path today. God put them there for a reason.

### **Living the Beatitude**

At the end of the day, I must ask myself if I really did something to make a difference in someone's life. If not, I must make a promise to try harder to be God's hands to others tomorrow and every day.

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## **Meek - Beatitude Three - Reflection 5**

“A real superhero never makes it about himself”-Chadwick Boseman

### **Reflection**

The message and true meaning of meekness came to the headlines in the last few days of August by the young actor, Chadwick Boseman. He found purpose and passion through his God given gift of acting, brought to the limelight in the movie Black Panther. As he rose to popularity with his actions as a leader, man of faith, dignity and pride, he shielded the world from his suffering. His quiet strength inspired young people to see something within themselves and to see something in each other, regardless of the color of their skin.

Mr. Boseman became the definition of meekness by not portraying himself as a hero, but by living his life with a spirit of gentleness and self control. His young followers will remember his message of taking their God given gifts and using them to inspire others.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Take a few minutes to (in Chadwick Boseman’s words): “Inhale and exhale this moment and thank God for the unique beauty and wonders of the day. We should take advantage of every moment we can to enjoy the simplicity of God’s creation, whether it be clear skies and sun or clouded over with gloom”. Find a simple way to enjoy and celebrate your true gift.

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## Beatitude 4 Reflection 1



**Blessed are they that hunger and thirst —**

The Rays of the Holy Trinity flow downward to the Bible and the Baptismal shell representing righteousness for which they hunger and thirst. The Staff and Cross represent the Lord as our Shepherd.

## **Hunger and Thirst - Beatitude Four - Reflection 2**

“What are you really hungry for?”

### **Reflection**

When my children were young, they considered a family dinner at a restaurant an adventure. They delighted in choosing what they would eat and made their selections very carefully.

Often, more than one menu item seemed appealing, and they found it difficult to decide. On those occasions, I would pose a simple question: “What are you really hungry for?” Once they truly decided what they were hungry for, they knew exactly what to order, and they left the restaurant satisfied.

Do you find yourself hungry for peace and purpose? Are you unfulfilled and discontent? Perhaps you have been feeding your spirit with all the wrong things. Take some time alone with God and ponder the question: “What am I really hungry for?” Only when you hunger and thirst for righteousness will you make choices that feed your soul and leave you satisfied.

### **Living the Beatitude**

For the next week, begin each morning with a prayer based upon Psalm 107:9.

“Dear God, please satisfy my longing soul and  
fill my hungry soul with goodness.”

Kristin Krick  
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## **Hunger and Thirst - Beatitude Four - Reflection 3**

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6)

### **Reflection**

The psalmist proclaims, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Psalm 42:1-2a). The psalmist is longing to be in the presence of God. He thirsts and hungers for the presence of God. Perhaps the words of this psalm were on the mind of Jesus when He spoke this Beatitude. Like the dehydrated deer, those who belong to the Kingdom of God are constantly seeking righteousness.

This righteousness that they seek is found only in Christ. In fact, this righteousness they seek could be described as Christlikeness or holiness. Those in the kingdom seek to become more and more like Christ, the King, with each passing day. It is a consuming passion of theirs.

How do we become more like Christ? We practice spiritual disciplines, which put us in a position, which allows God to work in us to conform us to the image of His Son. Jesus said that we will be satisfied. It is not our work, but the work of God. However, we must be consumed with becoming more like Christ in the same way the panting deer searches for the flowing stream.

### **Living the Beatitude**

- Set aside portions of your day to be alone with God in the Word and prayer.
- Think about what else you can do today to become more like Christ.

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## **Hunger and Thirst - Beatitude Four – Reflection 4**

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness  
for they will be satisfied”

### **Reflection**

I just got home from two weeks with my granddaughters. They are lovely children (of course!), and very articulate for their age (2 and 3), but I found myself spending a fair amount of time trying to figure out what they wanted from me. Was it a stuffed toy with an unintelligible name? A snack served in a very specific way? Did they even know what they wanted?

I’ve been thinking a lot recently about what I’m looking for when I reach for my phone and start scrolling. I am aware of a need for some kind of satisfaction, and I keep searching long after I know I won’t find it there.

When I was in my 30s and 40s, I was keenly aware of my need to be known and accepted at a deep level. In my 50s, my hunger was to tell my truth. Now I feel a call to walk with others and help them recognize that they are known and loved by God and that they can speak their truth. No other work has been as satisfying as this. I wonder if this is what Jesus meant.

### **Living the Beatitude**

- Can you name what you are hungry for today?
- Can you identify the void, the ache, or the deep desire of your heart?
- See if you find God there.

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## Hunger and Thirst - Beatitude Four - Reflection 5

“Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.  
Come, buy wine and milk  
Without money and without cost.”- Isaiah 55:1

### Reflection

Sometimes we might think that we have to fulfill a requirement in order to receive what we need at any given time, kind of like a purchase. We might even think that we don't deserve what we need because we haven't fulfilled a requirement or aren't holy enough.

Isaiah seems to indicate that what we need will be provided to us at **No Charge**. Our basic needs will be fulfilled out of the Love of God for God's creation.

We should take solace in knowing that God creates and sustains creation by giving everything that is needed, **Free of Charge**.

### Living the Beatitude

During this time of need, let yourself be aware of God's presence and that God, your creator, only wants what you yourself need at any given time. This to fulfill God's purpose in your life, and the life of creation itself.

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## Beatitude 5 – Reflection 1



### **Blessed are the merciful —**

The wing and hand of the angel with the cross symbolize the act of Mercy and represent those giving mercy as shown with the bandaged hand. The Caduceus represents the medical profession. The Chi Rho represents Christ and the bottommost symbol represents sickness and healing.

## **Merciful - Beatitude Five - Reflection 2**

“Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy”.

Matthew 5:7

### **Reflection**

I often feel badly when someone corrects me or points out what I sometimes know to be truthful but is still hard to hear. It certainly gives me food for thought, and perhaps that is what God is asking of me.

It hurts when I am criticized, misinterpreted, or something I have done has been discounted. I often think: “They really did not mean it” or “You know that is hard to hear but true.” I often try to reflect that this is a gift to help me, and appreciate Christ’s compassion and treatment of others. Jesus spoke truth: so that people could hear it.

It does not always work, but more often I ponder the times perhaps my comments have not been kind or truthful. It makes me sad, and yet, when I think of God’s continual mercy, constantly forgiving and loving, I am aware that perhaps I cannot control what others say or think, but I can try to do, say or think as Jesus would.

When I am on the receiving end, I don’t always want to forgive or extend forgiveness, but when I fail in my kindness and care for another I do hope that I can forgive as God does. I need to give mercy as I have so generously received mercy over and over and over again.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Today I will be conscious of others and my attitude and actions toward them I will try to be more aware of God’s gift of mercy to me and extend mercy and kindness to all I encounter, especially in my thoughts, words, and actions.

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## **Merciful - Beatitude Five - Reflection 3**

“No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, say the Lord; for I will forgive their evildoings, and remember their sin no more.”

Jeremiah 31:34

### **Reflection**

An old rusty barbed wire wreath hangs on my back porch. I liken myself to this coil of barbed wire that gets snagged by people. It is not uncommon for a name to drop into my prayers. I immediately offer the person up to God in prayer. It may be for a week, month, or year. If possible, a card is sent or a telephone call is made to initiate the conversation.

Challenges are not always so visible and the ongoing journeys are indescribable. I become the student, learning about mercy. God’s mercy takes many forms throughout the scriptures; from asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water (Jn. 4:7), to a prayer from the cross asking for forgiveness of the executioners (Luke 23:34).

Being merciful is meshed into our daily lives. It has become for me, to look with empathy into the eyes of another and carefully putting a whole kernel of myself in their hand.

### **Living the Beatitude**

- 1) Could a snag be an invitation to go beyond ourselves?
- 2) Take a few minutes to ponder what’s written upon your heart.
- 3) Bask in God’s rich mercy for this day!

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## **Merciful - Beatitude Five - Reflection 4**

“If there is no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”- Mother Teresa

### **Reflection**

It is hard to watch the suffering George Floyd, crying out to his mother, and not be moved to pity. It is also hard to watch the police officer, completely detached of compassion, continuing to suffocate him as Mr. Floyd begs for mercy.

How is it possible for this officer to ignore, with callous disregard, the multiple requests from the crowd to stop this inhumane behavior?

When we lose our connection to one another, we lose consciousness and forget who we are in Jesus. Violence destroys consciousness.

In the Charleston, SC church shooting, Dylan Roof confessed to killing the 9 church members because he wanted “to start a race war.” Yet, at the bond hearing, “One by one the victims’ relatives stood in the courtroom, forgave the accused racist killer, and prayed for mercy on his soul.”

Forgiveness is an act of Mercy. It is through peaceful acts of kindness towards one another that remind us of who we are in Jesus, and these acts of kindness restore consciousness. The pity they showed toward the hate-filled perpetrator is mercy in action.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Take time each night to forgive yourself of any transgressions you may have committed during that day. When we practice forgiveness to ourselves, we are then able to extend mercy to others.

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## **Merciful - Beatitude Five - Reflection 5**

C.S. Lewis wrote, “There is someone I love, even though I don’t approve of what he does. There is someone I accept, though some of his thoughts and actions revolt me. There is someone I forgive, though he hurts the people I love the most: That person is me.”

### **Reflection**

There are plenty of things I do that I don’t like, but if I can love myself without approving of all I do, I can also love others without approving of all they do. Friends, what could happen if we were to view others with the same grace/mercy we extend to ourselves? I think we would be living and loving more like Jesus wouldn’t we?

We are to love one another. We are not to judge but to bless; even our enemies. We are not to judge but to love because that’s what God is. God is extravagant with His love! Shockingly merciful! Lavishly forgiving! How can we, God’s forgiven people, be anything less?

Jesus teaches us that we are to love our enemies...do good to those who hate us. Bless those who curse us...pray for those who mistreat us. Jesus says, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

### **Living the Beatitude**

Mercy exhorts. Am I exhorting others to be merciful? Mercy prays. Prayer can release God’s blessings. Mercy preaches. **Preaching the gospel is the most necessary and merciful thing one can do.**

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## Beatitude 6– Reflection 1



**Blessed are the pure in heart —**

The Holy Trinity, the heart, hand and lily, represent the pure in heart. The doves represent purification.

## Pure in Heart – Beatitude Six – Reflection 2

“We may have only a few talents, but we have many gifts. Our gifts are the many ways in which we express our humanity. They are part of who we are: friendship, kindness, patience, joy, peace, forgiveness, gentleness, love, hope, trust, and many others. These are the true gifts we have to offer to each other.” ...

You are the Beloved by Henri J.M. Nouwen

### Reflection

When I think about the pure in heart and gift-giving I recall the many gifts I received from those who were pure in/of heart. Big (all encompassing) smiles, bear hugs, a stick of gum that meant I was a good friend that day - all while visiting in special education classrooms.

My older brother, though limited intellectually, had no difficulty expressing pure love to all, especially children and animals. Days after his death in 1992, a neighbor wrote, “He had a special intuition that was God-given. From his front porch day after day he called to the children who were playing on or near the circle to get out of the street when a car was coming. ... Just how many young adults are alive today because of his protection is known only by God.” Special gifts of caring, love and concern shared with the neighborhood.

### Living the Beatitude

- How often do you share your God-given gifts?
- Today, who will be the recipient of your gift (s)?

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## Pure in Heart - Beatitude Six - Reflection 3

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

Matthew 5:8

### Reflection

Most of my life, I thought being pure in heart meant being careful and always trying to live up to the rules of my faith. I didn't know the difference between my head and my heart. I was all about figuring things out. That's a very important part of life: yet, when it comes to being in love, it doesn't work. I couldn't think my way into loving anything, especially God. Loving and spiritual relationships come from the heart.

In later years, searching for more in life, among other endeavors, I began to meditate. In meditation I let go of thinking and placed my focus on a loving relationship with God in my heart. Over time God's love and his will for me became the guiding focus in life. Loving God means doing what God wants. Most decisions seem to fit seamlessly into the activities of the day. When I don't know what to do, I wait and listen in my heart. In time there's a peaceful, clear knowing that suggests what to do next. It's not rational. Heart knowing just is. It flows deeper than thinking. This mysterious truth is my ultimate reality. Loving God in my heart is the focus of my life. It draws one closer to understanding what it means to be a person with a pure heart.

### Living the Beatitude

“A pure heart is one that is unencumbered, unworried, uncommitted and which does not want its own way about anything but which, rather, is submerged in the loving will of God.”-Meister Eckhart.

What are ways I can ask God to make my heart purer?

Charlie Boll  
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## **Pure in Heart - Beatitude Six – Reflection 4**

“Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

NASV

### **Reflection**

What comfort it is in knowing that those whose hearts are undefiled and free of worldly views, are those, who are invited into an audience with our Lord and Savior.

Jesus taught how a tainted heart can prevent us from having a correct view of Him as well as a right view of ourselves. A pure heart helps to ensure that our hearts are free from deceit and the depravity that God alone can know the depth of its existence.

God is a God of Love. His will is that we as His children are given an invitation to sit with, commune and be instructed not only from His word but also in His presence as we meditate in quiet and are still before Him. He is in our lives to bring us into that one on one relationship with Him, where we gain confidence that we are His children.

Pureness of heart is a willingness to resist fleshly entrapments. Pureness of heart is to resist the pull on our minds that make it difficult for us to live a life of forgiveness and other characteristics that do not portray a life surrendered to Christ.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Pray and try to live the following prayer today:

Heavenly Father, our desire is to see you. Our desire is to enter into your holy hill where there is joy, peace and comfort in your presence. Bring us to the mount where we see you in your triumphant Glory and in the victory of your love that has made available to mankind. Amen

Rev. Marykaye Jacquet  
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### **Reflection**

Throughout the Bible the word “Heart” is mentioned over 1,000 times with over 50 descriptions. The broken, contrite, willing, obstinate, tender, wise, sorrowful, heavy, bitter, upright, and honest heart, just to name a few.

A pure in heart is one who is singly focused on God, putting the needs of others before one’s own. A pure hearted person gives themselves freely and fully to God. Their “soul” purpose is to serve God and accomplish His will. A single-focused heart is not divided, but wholly devoted to God. It has the capacity to experience God’s love in its purest form.

If we are mindful, we can recognize that, in our modern times, we are afflicted with divided hearts. Hearts that are pre-occupied, disordered and splintered. A divided heart must share its resources. There is not enough life-giving sustenance to feed a spiritually wounded heart ruptured by fear, anger, hopelessness, selfishness, lust, and greed. Eventually, the heart grows weak, contracts, withers, and dies.

So, how do we conquer a divided heart? By becoming single-hearted. When we make that interior journey to the secret inner chamber of our hearts, we find our true selves. That is the place where Jesus is waiting to meet us. Jesus alone can master the divided heart causing it to fully expand and bloom, radiating God’s love. Blessed be the pure of heart!

### **Living the Beatitude**

- 1) What word would you use to describe your heart?
- 2) List the ways in which your heart is divided?
- 3) What do you need to let go of to become more single-hearted?

## Beatitude 7 – Reflection 1



### **Blessed are they who are the peacemakers —**

The dove represents the Holy Spirit. The sword, spear, pruning hook and plow represents Isaiah 2:4 "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." The olive branch and olives represent peace.



## **Peacemakers - Beatitude Seven - Reflection 2**

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.  
(The Promises of AA)

### **Reflection**

For many years I had a resentment toward someone who I felt had wronged me. While I was churning inside, waiting, and hoping for him to acknowledge the error I perceived, and to apologize to me, he was living his life. I was the one suffering.

The constant anger was painful and affected my daily life. Eventually, through reflection, I came to see I had my share of the equation, and that, notwithstanding, what he may or may not have done, I too had erred, and I owed him an amends.

Once I saw this, it took me three years, but I finally made amends to him (It was hard to do and slow coming.) Not surprisingly, he thanked me, with no comment suggesting any awareness that I might be expecting him to apologize in return. And, he did not.

But, as soon as I apologized, amazingly my resentment toward him disappeared, along with my anger. I felt a physical relief. I felt peace. And, I was ok with his lack of response. I had accepted the situation and let go of my anger.

### **Living the Beatitude**

On at least a daily basis, pray for knowledge of God's will for you, and request the power to carry it out. This brings acceptance, which leads to peace, both within yourself, and as a gift to others.

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## Peacemakers - Beatitude Seven - Reflection 3

The Hebrew word “Shalom” is rooted in the notion of peace. *Shalom* is sometimes interpreted as appeasing God and being at peace with others; therefore, to be peacemakers, we must simultaneously aspire for internal peace within our hearts and external peace with the outside world.

### Reflection

What is the true meaning of peace? Internally, peace is serenity that comes from trusting and resting in God. Externally, peace is spreading the healing balm of forgiveness and reconciliation among our brothers and sisters in Christ; and all humanity.

According to Thomas Merton: “We are not at peace with each other because we are not at peace with ourselves, and we are not at peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God.”

We are primarily called to make peace with our storms of insecurity, jealousy, competitiveness, anger, and fear that rage inside of us. We should commit ourselves to understanding that making peace does not mean the avoidance of discomfort or conflict.

Whether it be internal or external discord, we are called to be mindful of different perspectives, intentions, experiences, and emotions at the center of ours and others discontent. Until we are willing to face conflict with an open and understanding heart, we cannot resolve the underlying issues that make peace so elusive.

Peacemakers embody the longing for peace from their *Heavenly Father*. Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the *Children of God*.

### Living the Beatitude

- How can I share my peace with those I encounter in my daily life?
- How can I eradicate conflict by becoming a conduit of mercy, and compassion?

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## Peacemakers - Beatitude Seven - Reflection 4

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”  
~Matthew 5:9

### Reflection

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” So, what does that mean? How does one make peace? Well, later in the Bible, James gives us some insight into how we might be peacemakers (James 3:13, 17-18). James says: “<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all: pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere. <sup>18</sup> Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”

### Living the Beatitudes

Here, James gives us seven ways that we can live the Beatitude of being a Peacemaker. We can be: (1) pure, pure of heart and spirit, (2) peace-loving, pursuing peace as much as possible, (3) considerate, not to inconvenience or hurt others (4) submissive, participating in the will of others, (5) full of mercy and good fruit, being proactive and acting merciful to others (6) impartial, open to reason from others not just ourselves, and (7) sincere, being truthful, honest, and acting in good faith.

So, each morning, let us wake up think about what we will be doing that day, and how we might best act as a peacemaker.

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## Peacemakers - Beatitude Seven - Reflection 5

*“Semper Fidelis, Always Free”*

### Reflection

Only the second Navy Chaplain to ever receive the Distinguished Service Cross, Father Vincent R Capodanno, a Lieutenant Chaplain attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Battalion was always a peacemaker.

Living at the tip of the spear, he served his beloved troops, during the Vietnam War. When he came upon wounded comrades, they always felt a tremendous peace in his presence as he prayerfully administered to their needs. In an assault by the North Vietnamese troops, he was severely wounded by mortar fire and refused medical treatment. When he attempted to rescue a wounded Corpsman, he was killed by a NVA machine gunner. His bravery and selfless service will never be forgotten.

Now, picture the scene in a little Irish Church on a Memorial Day weekend. I preached about this brave peacemaker who inherited the earth through his ultimate sacrifice amidst the tumult of war.

I knew that there was something very different about that day, and the parishioner's reaction to my homily. Several weeks later, the presiding priest asked if I had felt the presence of the Holy Spirit on that day. I agreed that I had truly experienced it.

### Living the Beatitude

Pray that, if we will all find ways to spread the peace of Christ in such a polarized world, we shall truly inherit the earth!

Deacon J. Peter Minogue  
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## Beatitude 8 – Reflection 1



**Blessed are they who are persecuted —**

Eternal life is symbolized by the heavenly crown and stars. The Palms symbolize victory over death. The sword and scourges represent persecution and suffering on earth.

## **Persecuted - Beatitude Eight -Reflection 2**

“But we are so sincere!”

### **Reflection**

When Charlie Brown’s baseball team would always lose, he was often quoted as saying at the end of the game, “But we are so sincere!”

Self-reflection should be a part of our end-of-the-day final prayer period. We should be asking ourselves what motivated us during the day? Did we feel persecuted or misunderstood because of our actions? Did we honestly strive to do “the next right thing” by our actions? If so, we must ask God to help us to let these feelings of persecution go in order for us to rest well and be spiritually fit to face tomorrow.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Just before lunch or your evening meal, ask yourself, “What did I do for the sake of righteousness or building God’s kingdom on earth, so far, today? And, “How do I feel other people reacted to my efforts?” If I felt persecuted, ask God to help me let it go.

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## **Persecuted - Beatitude Eight - Reflection 3**

“In Christ's Name”

### **Reflection**

I've never experienced persecution for any extended period of time. But, there was one occasion when I gained a deeper understanding of what it feels like to be threatened and powerless.

My husband and I were coming through American customs after a camping trip in Canada. This was before things got so much more regulated with customs. I did not bring my U.S. passport because I'd never needed one before. I was a middle-aged white woman who was hardly a threat to anyone.

The young black Customs Officer at the entrance to the United States at the Detroit border noticed I had a British accent. He grilled me and then he called in his supervisor, another black man who was also nasty and accusatory.

I was frightened, but eventually they let us through. I was angry, but later when I thought about how these black guys had probably been subjected to persecution their whole lives, my anger abated. I did not deserve how they treated me, and yet I awoke to how demeaning it is to be discriminated against simply because of the way you talk, or the color of your skin, or your gender, or any other irrational/unconscious bias.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Reflect upon Acts 16: 22-28

Are you the persecuted or the persecutor?

Are you Paul, or Silas, or the Jailer?

How can you become more righteous in Christ's name?

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## **Persecuted – Beatitude Eight - Reflection 4**

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

### **Reflection**

What comes to your mind when you hear the word persecution? You think of dying, giving your life for the cause of Jesus, or bearing some type of hardship. You might never be asked to suffer in a concentration camp, nor are we not in a country being bombed.

Yet, there is a lot of persecution in our world today. To persecute is to harass or punish because of a belief.

We can no longer stand by without doing something to help! We need to open our hearts and minds to hear what is going on, to listen, and then to act.

Being willing to hear and change our thoughts and desires to help a friend/ a neighbor! This is a way to start. Are we willing to do this? We come up with so many excuses, such as:

- No time,
- Too busy,
- No money,
- It is not my problem.

Jesus challenges us-whatever you do for the least of My sisters and brothers, you do to Me.

### **Living the Beatitude**

Hear what is going on, listen, and then act.

Jesus tells me, “Do not fear those who kill the body.” And, again, He says, “Love your enemies; bless those who persecute you; pray for those who mistreat you.”

After I have heard what is happening and listened with an open heart, what is Jesus asking me to do? And, am I willing to be “persecuted” for my beliefs!

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## Persecuted - Beatitude Eight - Reflection 5

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness  
Theirs is the kingdom of heaven—Matt 5:10

### Reflection

The kingdom of heaven is metaphor for the relationship God desires for those, abused by words or actions because they are different from the persecutor, or abuser. God is always with us; it is our awareness that is absent. Persecution awakens us to our need for relying on His presence and action.

The Scriptures are clear about what tends to persecute, pull us out of and not hold us firmly in, our relationship with God.

- The **world** – culture, society closed off to the presence and action of God. (**Galatians 5:19**). Five minutes of TV news, commercials, politics is enough to convince us.
- The **flesh** - self-indulgence, self-centeredness, call us to die to ourselves and live for Christ. But, we choose behaviors that actually separate us from God, others, and oneself. WE create hurting persons who hurt others. (**2 Cor 5:17**)

The **devil** - enemy, father of lies (**John 8:44**), whose goal is to divide and conquer. Judgmental, critical, condemning attitudes of self, and others. Calling evil good, and good evil.

God's response is to keep us together by giving us Jesus. Jesus gives us His Spirit to build Christian community, a safe haven from the world; and entrusts the community with the scriptures and His ministry. "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34)

With every encouragement comes new grace. Those who endure persecution witness to us the faithfulness and mercy of God and Jesus who says "I have conquered the world" (John 16:33)

### Living the Beatitude

- Select one of these persecutors: the world, the flesh or the devil as your most challenging persecutor.
- Now ask God to remove this persecutor.

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