



## **The Sermon on the Mount**

<sup>1</sup>When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>He began to teach them, saying:

### **The Beatitudes**

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup>Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:1-12

# Living the Beatitudes During this Pandemic

## Retreat Agenda

Saturday, February 20, 2021  
Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center

### Presented by Presentation Ministries

*An official lay association under the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*

#### Saturday, February 20, 2021

- 8:15 Songs of praise
- 8:30 Mass (The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available immediately after Mass until 10:15am.)
- 9:30 ***Beatitudes 1-4: How are we to live?*** - Marybeth & Felicity Kenny
- 10:00 Small group discussion or individual reflection
- 10:25 Songs of praise
- 10:30 ***Beatitudes 5-8: How are we to love?*** - Marybeth & Felicity Kenny
- 11:00 Small group discussion or individual reflection
- 11:30 Lunch (The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available during the lunch break.)
- 12:50 Songs of praise
- 1:00 ***What does a Beatitude-filled Lenten season look like?*** - Nathanael Egan
- 1:30 Small group discussion or individual reflection
- 2:00 ***Go forth: The Beatitudes and the Holy Spirit – Impossible without Him*** - Fr. Ethan Moore
- 2:30 Small group discussion or individual reflection
- 3:00 Closing remarks, opportunity for personal prayer (prayer teams available)

## **Discussion or Reflection Questions**

1. Poor in Spirit: The Beatitudes begin with humility or being "poor in spirit." Why do you think humility is first?
2. Poor in Spirit: What are your habits when it comes to depending on other things?
3. Mourn: What and/or whom have you grieved this year?
4. Mourn: How might it change your life if you incorporate repentance and confession into your life more often?
5. Meek: Does your speech or anger have lordship over your behavior? What causes you to grasp for control instead of submitting to God's will?
6. Meek: On a scale of 1 to 10, how meek are you now? How can you practice meekness in defense of the faith, in your speech, and in your anger?
7. Righteousness: What have you hungered and thirsted for, particularly in this time?
8. Righteousness: In all of the canceled events and unexpected free time, how have you filled it?
9. Marybeth and Felicity gave us some examples of radically living out the Beatitudes. Thinking of your daily tasks and interactions, what would every day Beatitudes look like if you were living them more intentionally?
10. How do the Beatitudes "respond to the natural desire for happiness" (CCC 1718) in our lives?

*To take some time to go deeper, read the portion of the Catechism on the Beatitudes (CCC 1716-1728) at the end of this booklet.*

***Beatitudes 5-8: How are we to love?*** - Marybeth & Felicity Kenny

1. Merciful: Where have you failed to forgive others in being angry, judgmental, or prideful?
  
2. Merciful: How can you show (or how have you shown) mercy during this pandemic?
  
3. Pure of Heart: Where have you invited competition for your heart's purity?
  
4. Pure of Heart: How has the pandemic made your heart less divided?
  
5. Peacemakers: In what circumstances have you lost your peace and why?
  
6. Peacemakers: If peace is, as St. Augustine describes, "the tranquility of order," where in your life (e.g., priorities, relationships) is there room for greater peace?
  
7. Insulted and Persecuted: How is being a victim different from being a martyr?
  
8. Insulted and Persecuted: Where do you feel not welcome? And why is that?
  
9. Have you ever gone to a store and become irritated or angry with the behavior of the staff? How did this affect your view of the store and whether you went back there again? Using this example about employees in a store, as members of a Catholic Christian community, why should we be concerned about our attitudes and character?

*To take some time to go deeper, read the portion of the Catechism on the Beatitudes (CCC 1716-1728) at the end of this booklet.*

## **Discussion or Reflection Questions**

1. Name three ways in which you can embrace redemptive suffering each day during Lent. What are some obstacles getting in the way? Take a minute to reflect on how God is greater than the aforementioned obstacles.
2. Meekness is a gentle nature and submission to the will of God. In what ways can you stand firm against the will of our culture today and instead submit to the will God?
3. Pick three beatitudes: one for prayer, one for fasting, and another for almsgiving. (See front page of this booklet.) Discuss how each beatitude can help you grow in these areas.
4. Reflecting on last year's Lent, how did that go for you? Where has the Lord been at work in previous Lenten observances for you?
5. What are you most in need of this Lent?

## Discussion or Reflection Questions

1. After hearing Fr. Ethan's call to action, how will you live the Beatitudes now? What really touched your soul during his talk?
2. Can you think of one person, living or deceased, who has been a good example for you to imitate, to help you live a Beatitude-lifestyle more fully? Maybe a friend or relative, or maybe a favorite saint...?
3. Meditate on the following Scripture passages and ask the Lord to speak His heart to you as you take in these Divinely-inspired words:

THESSALONIANS 5:14-19 -- We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19 -- Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

4. How can you grow in recognition of the fingerprints of Holy Spirit in your day-to-day moments?
5. Read Catechism paragraphs 1723-1724 (on the last page). Ask the Lord what He is asking of you in this particular time, in this place, and in your personal circumstances. Write down what you hear.

## **The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**1716** The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven:

*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.*

*Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.*

*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.*

Matthew 5:1-12

**1717** The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

**1718** The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it:

We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated.

How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you.

God alone satisfies.

**1719** The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith.

**1720** The New Testament uses several expressions to characterize the beatitude to which God calls man:

- the coming of the Kingdom of God;
- the vision of God: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God";
- entering into the joy of the Lord;
- entering into God's rest:

There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be at the end without end. For what other end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom which has no end?

**1721** God put us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life. With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ and into the joy of the Trinitarian life.

**1722** Such beatitude surpasses the understanding and powers of man. It comes from an entirely free gift of God: whence it is called supernatural, as is the grace that disposes man to enter into the divine joy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” It is true, because of the greatness and inexpressible glory of God, that “man shall not see me and live,” for the Father cannot be grasped. But because of God’s love and goodness toward us, and because he can do all things, he goes so far as to grant those who love him the privilege of seeing him...For “what is impossible for men is possible for God.”

**1723** The beatitude we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement—however beneficial it may be—such as science, technology, and art, or indeed in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love:

All bow down before wealth. Wealth is that to which the multitude of men pay an instinctive homage. They measure happiness by wealth; and by wealth they measure respectability...It is a homage resulting from a profound faith...that with wealth he may do all things. Wealth is one idol of the day and notoriety is a second... Notoriety, or the making of a noise in the world—it may be called “newspaper fame”—has come to be considered a great good in itself, and a ground of veneration.

**1724** The Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and the apostolic catechesis describe for us the paths that lead to the Kingdom of heaven. Sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we tread them, step by step, by everyday acts. By the working of the Word of Christ, we slowly bear fruit in the Church to the glory of God.

#### IN BRIEF

**1725** The Beatitudes take up and fulfill God’s promises from Abraham by ordering them to the Kingdom of heaven. They respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart.

**1726** The Beatitudes teach us the final end to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God.

**1727** The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God. It is supernatural, as is the grace that leads us there.

**1728** The Beatitudes confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods; they purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things.