LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

www.orlaghinthecity.ie

All Saints Day

1st November 2026

Matt. 5:1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
Matt. 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matt. 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Matt. 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Matt. 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Matt. 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Matt. 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Matt. 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Matt. 5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness 'sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matt. 5:11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus believed in a "happy God", the creator God who looks on all his creatures with compassionate love, the God of life, not death, who cared more about the people's sufferings than their sins.

If we keep coming back to Jesus' words of blessing, we find them always full of new meaning. They always shine a new and different light on the moment we are living now.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who know how to live with less.They will have fewer problems, be more attentive to people in need, live in greater freedom. When we are able to understand that, we will become more human.

Blessed are the meek, those who empty their hearts of violence and aggression. They are a gift to our violent world. When we can all do that, we will be able to lived together in the peace.

Blessed are those who weep over the sufferings of others. They are good people; they help to build a world of friendship and solidarity.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, who have not lost the desire to be more just and to make a society with dignity for all. They nourish the best that the human spirit has to offer.

Blessed are the merciful, those who know how to forgive from the bottom of their heart. They are the people best able to bring us reconciliation.

Blessed are those who purify their hearts of hatred, deception or mixed motives. With them we build a new future.

Blessed are those who work for peace with patience and faith; who are never discouraged by obstacles and difficulties; who are always seeking the best for everyone. We need them to restore our life together.

Blessed are those who suffer insults, persecution and calumny for following the way opened up by Jesus. They help us to overcome evil with good.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA - The Way Opened up by Jesus

This passage marks the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in which the moral teaching of the kingdom of God is presented.

In the first three beatitudes, those normally considered in need of pity are in fact esteemed. The poor in spirit, the meek, and those who mourn are those who reject the way of the world with its arrogance, oppression and superficial pleasures. Jesus declares that the kingdom and its joy will be experienced by those who put their trust in God. Those who mourn are not those who are gloomy but rather those who realise that the world is not as it is meant to be. Our true happiness lies in yearning for righteousness, in showing mercy, working for peace and in having an undivided heart. Choosing the way of the kingdom will lead to difficulties and persecution but this need not deter us; rather it should be a source of joy for it means that we share in the great tradition of the prophets.

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

The blessings in the Beatitudes are primarily future blessings, but there can be an anticipation of the blessings in the present. At first reading some Beatitudes may seem to describe circumstances that you would like to avoid at all costs. Read them slowly. Stay with each one for a while. Let yourself get a sense of the paradox involved in each one. Perhaps you have had an experience of a deeper and more authentic life, a blessing, when

- you were poor - you knew your need of God
- you mourned – could feel for others
- you were meek – neither spineless nor emotionally out of control
- you hungered and thirsted for some cause
- you were merciful rather than vengeful
- you were pure in heart – a person of integrity, whose actions and intentions correspond
- you were a peacemaker
- you were persecuted because you stood for something

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

If the Sermon on the Mount summarises the teachings of Jesus 'public ministry, the Sermon itself is summed up in the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes are "wisdom teaching", a biblical literary form that our Church has tended to neglect in recent centuries. Jesus is reporting facts, not moralising. At no point does he say, "you should do this." He says simply, "people like this are blessed" and lets us draw our conclusions.

In the bible (as in all great religious traditions) we enter wisdom through paradox. Things that are usually opposed are reconciled at a higher level, giving us new insight – and new joy. The Beatitudes are paradoxes and we must make an effort to read them as such which is difficult because they have become familiar and no longer surprise us. If a beatitude does not surprise (even shock) us, it means that we have lost its meaning.

The paradox is in two "movements" (like the movements of a symphony).

a) A main section brings together two "opposites":

" –poverty of spirit" and "possessing the kingdom";

" –gentleness" and "having the earth for one's heritage";

" –mourning" and "being comforted", etc.

The bringing together is simultaneous. We weaken the Beatitudes when we make the second a "reward" for the first.

The bringing together must be based on experience. The question in each case is, "When have I seen these two things combined in one person?"

b) Having seen the combination, we exclaim "How blessed!" (in the wide sense explained above).

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels

The Beatitudes are not idealising some future utopia, but are lived and experienced in the here and now. It sounds like a paradox or a riddle, but here we are lovingly invited to grow into what the beatitudes praise. This is what a real *metanoia* (a turning around) looks like. As the Sermon on the Mount unfolds, we are invited into whole relationships, with God, with our loved ones, even with our enemies. The Beatitudes are a predisposition for what follows.

This week, spend time ruminating on one of the Beatitudes each day. See what arises. Who are the poor n spirit? Who are the peacemakers around you or those who are persecuted?

Living the Beatitudes in today's world involves living an alternative reality to the status quo. We are invited to dream and take risks. What might this look like for you?

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT—Go Deeper

INITIAL OBSERVATION

The translation of the word *makarios* is disputed. It should almost certainly not be translated as "blessed" because, at least in English, that sounds like blessed by God. Happy is more accurate, but with the added notes of peace (*shalom* in the rich sense) and wholeness (*teleios*, also in the rich sense). A recent study suggests "flourishing" as the best way to capture the resonance of the original.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Who doesn't want to be happy? As St Augustine writes, "all persons want to be happy; and no persons are happy who do not have what they want." (De beata vita 2.10) Augustine knows that it is not so simple: having what and how do we keep it so that we don't lose it? The question really becomes what do I desire? In the final analysis, there is a hunger of the human heart for God, often recognised only slowly, and a hunger for goodness and virtue, also a slow conversion. In God, we find a source of happiness which nothing can take away; in virtuous living, chiefly seeking the good of others, we come to our true fulfilment and contentment.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA - tarsus.ie