

THE BEATITUDES: A JOURNEY TOWARDS GOD A LIBERATION FROM TRAPS SHARING THE MISSION OF CHRIST CELEBRATING LIFE

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

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3-10)

THE STANCE OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

[1] Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of God

Poverty of spirit is the radical awareness of our total dependence on Divine Providence.

We live out of our poverty.

All is gift.

A good spiritual director allows those who come for direction to experience and accept their poverty of spirit WITHIN the context of God's love. If people try to do that in any other context then they fill up their poverty with idols and ideologies.

The discipline of poverty is to remain empty.

Living our poverty of spirit allows us to focus on God.

The stance of the director is spiritual poverty

When we enter our poverty of spirit,
we discover that there are aspects of
our lives that trap us and stop us from
living joyfully, simply, and
compassionately.

We need to be liberated from these.

The second beatitude offers us the
next step in that liberation.

[2] Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted

To mourn is to acknowledge the deaths that shape us and to respond to the call to a life beyond those deaths.

That process of creation is a constant transformation.

Our dead is not necessarily only people. Our dead can include dreams, hopes, ideals, past ways of living or past relationships.

We must first look at the ways we are trapped by fear.

We are asked to hand over to resurrection what traps us in death. Our work is to bring the dead to that transforming love.

Mourning is quite different from grief. Grief kills. Mourning liberates.

The healing of the spiritual director is through mourning

When we mourn, we discover a certain liberation.

But we also discover those elements in our lives that refuse to let us be free.

They do violence to us.

Because we are not always conscious of them, they also incite us to be violent in our relationships with other people.

The third beatitude addresses this issue of violence.

“The kingdom of heaven is overtaken by violence; the violent bear it away” (Matthew 11:12).

Violence destroys the community love seeks to create.

[3] Blessed are the gentle; they shall inherit the earth

We are all vulnerable.

Vulnerability creates tension.

Vulnerability can breed fear Fear creates alienation . Alienation manifests itself in violence

But there is another approach to being vulnerable.

Vulnerability opens us to humility. Humility reveals Divine Providence. Divine Providence saves.

We do not have to be violent to maintain ourselves.

God's power comes "to save all the meek of the earth" (Psalm 76:10).

The awareness of our lives being held in God's care moves us to gratitude, especially when grasp how easily we can be destroyed. This spirit of gratitude manifests itself in the gentleness with which we deal with ourselves, others, and the world.

To be gentle calls us to be attentive (as opposed to being blind) to the forces that comprise our world; to be discerning, insightful, political and flexible in dealing with these forces; and to be responsible – rather than reactive – for the transformation of the oppressor and the oppressed.

This joy allows us to see, in the cracks and the terrors of this world, the promise of paradise.

The care of the spiritual director is through attentiveness

Much of our lives are caught up in violence, from which there seems to be no escape.

We feel helpless and overwhelmed. We cry out for a different reality. We cry out for conversion.

Those who hunger and thirst for such a transformed world, and who place themselves on the path to such a life, enter into the work of the fourth beatitude.

The practice of freedom lies in the midst of evil, not beyond it.

The freedom that liberates is generated through God's saving activity.

True justice comes only from that justification.

The justice we embody is the justification we experience.

How we treat ourselves and others manifests not only what we love, but how we love.

When we are rooted in the love who loves us, we strive for the justice that liberates all.

Our desire is for the community of love that includes all without exception.

When we follow the path of that desire, we allow God to come to us, and through us, into the world.

The inner work of the Spiritual Director is Incarnational

When we experience being loved, we start to see how destructive violence is.

We are loved even when we are violent in our inability to love.

This is the experience of mercy.

We give what we have received.

[5] Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy

Mercy is absurd.

Human mercy, like divine mercy, goes out of itself to transform the suffering of the sinner. Human mercy flows as an act of gratitude at having itself experienced divine mercy.

The merciful are not judgmental. They know what it is to be trapped and what it is to be freed from those traps, and how easily, but for the constant support of God, they may be trapped again.

The preferential option for the poor recognizes the poverty in everyone and addresses it as Jesus did in his gospel life, scandalizing the self-righteous, who were blind to their own needs and thus blind to the needs of others (Matthew 25:34-40).

We can never be as merciful as we would wish, but we can be merciful as we are, with the little we have.

The offering of the spiritual director is mercy

Every aspect of creation, including ourselves, is interconnected.

We are never fully converted, and will never be until all is fully united in God.

Through our acts of mercy, we offer to all the gift of living in God.

When we live this way we are turned towards God.

Then we desire God and we desire to find God in all things and all persons, and in all the circumstances of our lives.

To live this way is to be pure of heart and embrace God. our beloved.

[6] Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

Our deepest desire is for God.

Our deepest desire, which is the weaving together of all of our desires into a single focus, seeks God in all things.

That desire directs our spiritual path.

As we move on the path of purity of heart, we discover a singleness of purpose that makes us flexible to the Spirit.

That union of spirit – the passion for community – carries us to those places where displaced and separated energies come to light. The Spirit reweaves those straying energies into a simpler and more integrated life

The trials of living this way embody the struggle between narcissism and community.

The pure of heart see Evil is fragmented holiness;

The task of the pure in heart is the careful gathering up of those fragments into unity.

The Path of the spiritual director is through desire

As the pure of heart walk towards God, they gather up the broken, the disaffected, the alienated, and the fearful, along with the rich, the powerful, the gifted, the lucky.

They create an open community of common affection, mutual sharing, and respect.

It is the work of the peacemaker to help create and maintain such communities.

They are the kingdom of God on earth.

[7] Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God

Hatred destroys not only the other but also us.

The only way to overcome an enemy is to make the enemy a friend.

It is a question of imagination.

We live in imagined worlds,

Before we can create community, we need to ask what fantasies shape our lives and, further, what forces in our lives maintain those fantasies.

We become peacemakers only as we makes peace with ourselves,

In this openness, the enemy can become the friend. This openness does not manipulate the other into becoming a friend. The other is always free to choose.

Even self-sacrificing love – radical openness – does not make the other loving. But it is the most we can do.

We love each other, or we die.

The work of the spiritual director creates community

To be a peacemaker is to enter the dark and dangerous places of life where there is conflict, violence, separation, and distrust, and to allow ourselves to be an instrument of God's mercy there.

It is to be a prophet. The hope and life offered by peace run counter to the powers of evil that seek destruction and despair.

They turn against the peacemaker in violence. Because evil is not creative, the pattern of its destructiveness is the same throughout the ages.

The lives of prophets witness their intimacy with a power greater than evil.

They have found that intimacy by walking the path of the Beatitudes.

They have found a love they offer to the world.

[H] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

When our hearts are filled with longing for the kingdom, that longing shapes everything we do.

We hold values different from the world's, trust what the world neither sees nor believes in and, then, because we are judged as "other," we become the objects of derision, or fear, or hatred.

This hunger for God makes us fools for Christ's sake, and lets us share in the passion the Father has for his Son and in the passion the Son has for the Father.

That passion to say yes to life, to make the leap of faith in every moment of life, and to return to the marketplace bearing gifts is the Spirit.

The path of the Beatitudes always returns us filled with the Spirit to a world to be transformed.

When we fully commit ourselves to life, the lives we lead are Revelation for others. Then, Christ lives in us and through us.

The gift to the spiritual director is this world

HOW TO LIVE THE BEATITUDES?

**BREATHE IN LOVE
BREATHE OUT LOVE**

ALLOW GRATITUDE TO BE YOUR GUIDE