

Homily 4th Sunday Year A 2023

We call them Beatitudes not *happinesses*. Blessing, as used in the gospel, refers to a divine gift. Happiness is a consequence of being blessed by God.

Made in the image of God, we acknowledge this presence in Baptism. We welcome the baby, the child, the adult into the family of God with a sign of the cross which is also a sign of blessing. Parents have a special blessing for their children, so bless them every day.

Macrina Wiederkehr osb says the Beatitudes are for people who have their hearts set on the Reign of God. They are a way of life designed for those who want their lives to be a blessing.

I turned to the empty ones.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? I asked.

Is there anything good about being that poor?

The poor in spirit replied:

can God fill anyone who is full?

What does it mean to mourn?

I asked those who were sorrowing.

*An old man stepped forward,
to mourn, he said, is to be given
a second heart.*

It is to care so deeply

that you show your ache in person.

To mourn is to be unashamed of tears.

It is to be healed and broken all in the same moment.

*Blessed are you if you are so full of compassion
you see the need before it's spoken.*

*Blessed are you if you can offer to others
a heart that feels their sorrow;*

*a Heart that can wait quietly beside them;
a heart that doesn't try to hurry the healing.*

*To mourn is to forget yourself for a moment
and get lost in someone's else's pain
and then, finally to find yourself
in the very act of getting lost.*

And to the meek, I said tell me about this beatitude.

*It doesn't sound like a blessing
to me, it looks like the face of weakness.*

*A face from the crowd of lowly ones
shone forth with strength.*

Her smile reached the door of my heart.

Then this lowly one spoke.

*To be meek is to be so full of truth
that everyone is comfortable in your presence.*

*It is to have a spirit young as the dawn;
a heart as old as the evening.*

*It is to know yourself so well
and live yourself so fully
that your very presence calls forth gifts in others.*

*It is to be comfortable with your anger
and with your compassion.
The meek one grew silent for a moment.
Then lifting her eyes, she said:
When you are meek
you don't need a lot of followers,
you just need a lot of truth.
The lowly ones are able
to stand out in the open and speak the truth,
sometimes quietly, sometimes loudly.
The truth will be spoken
even if no one listens
even if no one hears.
For the meek person doesn't need followers;
the meek need to be true to themselves.*

Jeanne Chézard de Matel wrote about the beatitudes.

PEACE is God's dwelling place. Let us strive to maintain this peace with others and promote it if they do not possess it."

"Through GENTLENESS, we will possess Jesus who loves to be welcomed by gentle people."

"We must surrender everything and be truly POOR to possess the reign of heaven within ourselves... The truly poor obey perfectly and unreservedly, since nothing holds them back."

"Let us strive to possess PURITY OF HEART, which is the eye of our soul. God's eyes are on the just because it pleases God to look at them. But there is another marvel; that, through those same eyes, the just will see God."

"We know that God loves mercy so much that He represents it as the highest of all His works. For, by little acts of MERCY, we will receive acts that are eternal and great."

"Blessed is the one who sheds tears of SORROW and love at Jesus' feet! That person will be consoled by the Divine Majesty who looks upon them with delight."

"Our all-loving Incarnate Word will cause the manna of thousands of blessings to fall if we possess justice. Whoever HUNGERS AND THIRSTS FOR JUSTICE finds it difficult to endure the injustices of the world."

"Happy will we be if people regard us as foolish for love of You. Let us struggle, and God will strengthen us with loving grace. May the stones of PERSECUTION not take us by surprise."

A couple of thoughts

Finally, my Winter Fat is gone. Now I am developing Spring Rolls!

When I lost the fingers in my right hand, I asked the Doctor if I would ever write again. He said, probably . . . but I wouldn't count on it.