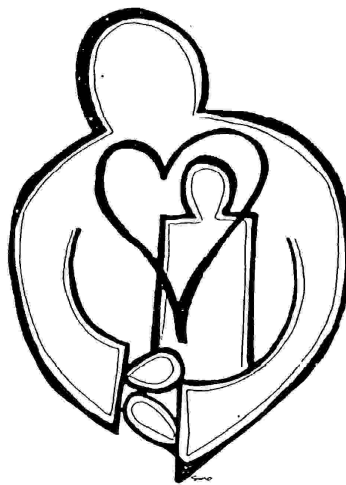


The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service & Justice

A Parish Day of Recollection



Catholic Diocese of Richmond

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The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service and Justice
Retreat Outline

Six Hour Format

- 8:45 Advertised start, refreshments available; registration
- 9:15 Welcome; introduce facilitators; introduction
- 9:25 Icebreaker if needed; otherwise, just introductions at the table if not done already
- 9:40 General introduction to the Beatitudes
- Short talk
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 10:00 Blessed are the poor in Spirit
- Short talk
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 11:00 Short break
- 11:15 Blessed are the meek
- Short talk
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Witness
- Short talk on witness
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 2:00 Debrief the day
- 2:30 Fill out evaluation forms
- 2:45 Final prayer
- 3:00 Dismissal

The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service and Justice
Retreat Outline

Five hour format

- 10:00 Advertised start, refreshments available; registration
- 10:15 Welcome; introduce facilitators; introductions at tables
- 10:25 General introduction to the Beatitudes
- 10:40 Blessed are the poor in Spirit
- Short talk on witness
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 11:15 Short Break
- 11:30 Blessed are the meek
- Short talk on witness
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Witness
- Short talk on witness
 - Silent reflection time
 - Table sharing
- 2:00 Debrief the day
- 2:30 Fill out evaluation forms
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Two Versions of the Beatitudes in Scripture

Matthew 5: 1-12

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

He began to teach them, saying:

"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. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6: 20-26

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service and Justice

Examination of Conscience by Doris Donnelly from *The Fire of Peace: A Prayer Book*

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - Do I fear being poor, in spirit or otherwise, and prefer to be rich in money, brains or influence?
 - Is my desire for poverty of spirit congruent with my lifestyle?
 - Do I use the word of God to rationalize my lifestyle or am I willing to have God's word criticize it?
 - Do I cling to my own ideas, opinions and judgments, sometimes to the point of idolatry?
 - Do I contribute my time, talent and money to the poor of the world?
 - Do I make it my business to examine the causes of poverty in our world and work to eradicate unjust systems?

2. "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."
 - "Do I grieve over loneliness, despair, guilt and rejection in the lives of others?"
 - Am I willing to admit my own despondencies and need for comfort?
 - Do I minister consolation and healing, or do I blandly encourage people to "have courage," thereby avoiding the opportunity to mourn with them?
 - Am I doing anything to dry the tears of those who mourn over war, poverty, hunger, injustice?

3. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
 - Do I see any value in meekness or nonviolence?
 - Do I cringe at the thought of being meek?
 - Do I understand nonviolence as a way to fight evil with good, and do I choose to live that way?
 - How much are intimidation and force a part of my lifestyle?
 - Do I work for nonviolent social change?
 - Do I foster a cooperative spirit in my children?

4. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."
 - "Have I kept myself ignorant of important current events that are manifestations of injustice?"
 - Are my energies and passions focused on Christ, or they scattered, disordered, divided?
 - Am I honestly trying to improve the quality of life around me?
 - Am I trying to improve the environment, race relations, care for the unborn, sexual equality, the lives of the poor and destitute?
 - Have I decided that I will not be satisfied until justice is fulfilled in my own life, within my family, my church, my community, my world?
 - Have I let fear keep me silent when I should have spoken out against prejudice, injustice and violence?

5. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."
 - Do I operate on a double standard of expecting mercy but not wanting to grant it?
 - Do I prefer the strict law and order approach, or that of mercy, tenderness and compassion?
 - Are there places in my life where people are suffering because of me and my unforgiving attitude?
 - Am I devoid of a merciful spirit toward those I call "enemy"?
 - What is my attitude toward capital punishment, ex-convicts?

6. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."
 - Am I trusting and trustful?
 - Do I value living without pretense, or am I constantly fearful that someone will take advantage of me?
 - Am I open and honest about who I am and what I do?
 - Do I deflect the attention and honor due to God and claim those things for myself?
 - Have I been untrue to myself, even a little, for advancement, money or good opinion?
 - Have I failed to take time for prayer, solitude, reflection?

7. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God."
 - Am I eager for reconciliation or do I antagonize and yearn for revenge?
 - Do I think apologizing is a sign of weakness?
 - Am I willing to be a bridge in family and community arguments?
 - Do I support violence in films, television and sports?
 - Have I studied peace and taken initiatives to stop violence and war?
 - Have I read and do I support the many official church statements against the arms race, nuclear weapons and war?
 - Is my presence a source of peace to those around me?

8. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."
 - Do I criticize or ridicule those who suffer for their beliefs?
 - Am I embarrassed to step out of the mainstream to stand up for a principle?
 - Who are my heroes? Are there any among them who gave their lives without vengeance for what is true?
 - Do I worship security and fear costly discipleship?
 - Have I called myself Christian without making my life a witness to the teachings of Jesus?
 - Have I openly supported those who defend justice and give their lives for peace?

9. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."
 - Do I live confident of the promises of Jesus?
 - Do I surrender to pessimism and anxiety?
 - Do I perceive that there is a paradoxical victory in the cross of Jesus that breaks through power structures and conquers in peace and love?
 - Have I become cynical rather than hopeful?

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”
The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service and Justice
Table Sharing

After taking some quiet time to consider these voices, participants will share how these voices help us to better understanding this Beatitude – “Blessed are the Meek, they shall inherit the earth.”

VOICE I

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people/men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of people/ men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone/ man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.

- Pastoral Constitution On The Church In The Modern World *Gaudium Et Spes* Promulgated By His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, On December 7, 1965

VOICE II

The human community and the natural world will go into the future together as a single sacred community or we will both perish in the desert.”

- Thomas Berry

VOICE III

Julian of Norwich lived in a time when over 1/3 of the known population died of the plague. Still she wrote:

And in this Jesus showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazel nut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, ‘What may this be?’ And it was answered generally thus, ‘It is all that is made.’ I marveled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God.

In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it. The second that he loves it. And the third, that God keeps it. But what is this to me? Truly, the Creator, the Keeper, the Lover. For until I am substantially oned to him, I may never have full rest nor true bliss. That is to say, until I be so fastened to him that there is nothing that is made between my God and me.

VOICE IV

The Eucharist “is celebrated in order to offer ‘on the altar of the whole earth the world’s work and suffering’ This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all of creation. The Son of Man became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. ... Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished by the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ.

- John Paul II, *On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church* [# 8]

VOICE V

The emergence of ecological consciousness of the last three decades has stretched the notion of salvation even further to include not only human well-being, but the well-being of all of creation as well. The spiritual wholeness that the gospel brings is neither disembodied nor dematerialized but reflects the love of a God who expresses the divine identity in the told solidarity with creation.

- **Points of a Mission for the 21st Century:** SVD Congregation Statement

VOICE VI

These rights as presented here are based upon the intrinsic relations that the various components of Earth have to each other. The planet Earth is a single community bound together with interdependent relationships. No living being nourishes itself. Each component of the Earth community is immediately or mediately dependent on every other member of the community for the nourishment and assistance it needs for its own survival. This mutual nourishment, which includes the predator-prey relationships, is integral with the role that each component of the Earth has within the comprehensive community of existence.

- **Harvard Statement: Religions of the World**

In a special manner humans have not only a need for but a right of access to the natural world to provide not only the physical need of humans but also the wonder needed by human intelligence, the beauty needed by human imagination, and the intimacy needed by human emotions for fulfillment. (1/1/01)

- **Ecology: Discovering the Common Ground** by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim

VOICE VII

Millennium Goals

1 To eliminate Extreme Poverty and Hunger by 2015.

850 million people are hungry all the time. Every 5 seconds a child dies because she or he is hungry The three richest people in the world own assets that exceed the combined gross Domestic Product of the world 48 poorest countries.

- **Earth Charter**

The Beatitudes: A Spirituality of Service and Justice
Closing Prayer

Call to praise: Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord, are holy!
Come and fill our hearts with your peace, Alleluia!

Leader: God of Life, we have arrived at this moment of sacred time, and as are all your moments, it is a moment of grace, truth and decision.

All: We recognize your precious gift of time for conversion and hope and healing.

Leader: May we embrace this moment with gratitude leaving behind the darkness of evil where self-interest, domination and injustice prevail.

All: Grace us with your light.

Reader: A reading from the Book of Micah

Leader: One of the first stages in healing is the acknowledgement of sin in our lives and in our world. I would ask that you take a few moments of silence to think about what Luke framed as a “woe.” Please take some time to think about our sinfulness individually and as a world and frame with these words: “Woe to us...” (e.g. Woe to us if we forget the cries of the poor in our world.)

Lamentations

After all these lamentations have been offered, we pray together: **For this we are truly sorry.**

Affirmations

Leader: To lament this sinfulness is not the whole story, though. God does not allow us to wallow in our sin. God invites us to the fullness of life. Like Jesus, we present for blessing the signs of hope, the signs of God’s reign in our midst. Please take a few moments of silence to formulate a blessing and frame it with these words: “Blessed are we...” (e.g. Blessed are we when we work for peace.)

At the conclusion of all our blessings, we pray:

For these signs of hope, we give you thanks and praise!

Leader: Let us pray:

Side I: Make us, O Lord, a church that will be more courageous than cautious;

Side II: That we will not merely comfort the afflicted, but afflict the comfortable;

Side I: That we will not only love the world, but demand justice;

Side II: That we will not remain silent when people are calling for a voice;

Side I: That we will not pass by on the other side when wounded humanity is waiting to be healed;

Side II: That we will not only be called to worship, but also sent out to witness;

Side I: That we will follow Christ even when the way points to a Cross.

Side II: Give us the confidence as Church to challenge injustice
And to nurture the flame of justice until it burns brightly.

All: Accompany us, Spirit of justice and community and light our way.
Move us, Spirit, heal us, guide us and challenge us,
Call us to action and to prayer.
May your passion for justice burn through us and in us,
and warm the hearts of those around us, encouraging hope and overcoming fear.
To this end, we offer ourselves in the name of him
who loved us and gave himself for us.
Blessed be God forever. Amen

Closing Song: “Blessed are They” by David Haas

Blest are they, the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they full of sorrow; they shall be consoled.

Refrain: Rejoice and be glad. Blessed are you. Holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they, the lowly ones. They shall inherit the earth.
Blest are they who hunger and thirst. They shall have their fill.

Refrain: Rejoice and be glad. Blessed are you. Holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they who show mercy. Mercy shall be theirs.
Blest are they the pure of heart. They shall see God.

Refrain: Rejoice and be glad. Blessed are you. Holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they who seek peace; they are the children of God.
Blest are they who suffer in faith, the glory of God is theirs.

Refrain: Rejoice and be glad. Blessed are you. Holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blest are you who suffer hate all because of me.
Rejoice and be glad yours in the kingdom. Shine for all to see!

Refrain: Rejoice and be glad. Blessed are you. Holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad. Yours is the kingdom of God.

The Beatitudes and the Spirituality of Justice Evaluation

Your feedback will help us improve this experience for other people. We appreciate your comments:

Please rate with five (5) being highest and one (1) lowest

1. Overall flow of the program:

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

2. enough quiet time for reflection

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

3. enough time for discussion

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

4. clear connection between the Beatitudes and Justice

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

5. Program was thought-provoking and/or inspirational

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

Evaluation continues on the other side

Please rate each section with five (5) being highest and one (1) lowest.

General Introduction

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

The Poor in Spirit

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

The Meek will inherit the Earth

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

Cloud of Witnesses

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

Closing Prayer

5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

Any other comments to help us improve this program?