



Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
February 1, 2026

Blessed Are Our Hassles

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

As much as we all might like a hassle-free life, for the person of faith, the beatitudes are markers of when God slips into our consciousness. They are life's doorways to a deepening sense of God-with-Us.

Blessed are the poor in spirit is not about material poverty, though it may include such times. To be poor in spirit is to be dependent upon God because we know that all good comes from him—our Creator. Despite our perceived self-sufficiencies, we can do nothing without God.

Blessed are they who mourn is about times when we grieve the loss of someone or something we love deeply. Who or what will now sustain us?

Sunday Readings

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12–13

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who have observed his law; / Seek justice, seek humility.

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong.

Matthew 5:1–12a

[Jesus said,] "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Blessed are the meek is about giving up the need to have our own way all the time in order to recognize and follow God's way.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, that is, for a relationship with God. It is ultimately a hunger for harmony.

Blessed are the merciful is about being forgiving and about those who live out the corporal works of mercy—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and the rest. In them, we find the presence of God.

Blessed are the clean of heart is when we come to realize we cannot have it all. There is only One who will satisfy our longing.

Blessed are the peacemakers is about those who not only love peace but also work for peace, because God is peace.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness is about those who live for an ultimate good greater than their own. †



The beatitudes are life's doorways to a deepening sense of God-with-Us.

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

The desire to work together for a common purpose reflects an essential reality: no one is Christian alone! We are part of a people, a body established by the Lord.... The Christian life is not lived in isolation.... It is lived with others, in a group and in community, because the risen Christ is present wherever disciples gather in his name.

ADDRESS, ROME, JUNE 6, 2025



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Which beatitude would be a good title for your autobiography?
- Which beatitude needs the greatest growth in your life?



The Beatitudes: The Heart of Jesus' Teaching

The Redemptorists

The blessings (beatitudes) that Jesus pronounces are the blessings of the *anawim*—those who know they need God. To be poor “in spirit” is nothing more and nothing less than to know that you need God. That you have nothing without God; that you are totally dependent on God. Significantly, the Greek word for the blessed ones—the *makariol*—means that they are not subject to fate, not victims of bad luck, not even recipients of good luck! No. They are blessed and embraced by God because they have surrendered themselves to God. They trust only in God's grace. Nothing can throw them off course. They are not subject to the many external forces that come our way as human beings.

A story is told of Mahatma Gandhi: During his non-violent campaign to free India of its colonial shackles, he arrived at a station packed with crowds of people waiting for him to

speak. Reaching into his *dhoti*, he pulled out his little copy of the New Testament. Gandhi's devotion to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is well documented. Opening to Matthew, chapter 5, he read the Beatitudes, after which he said to the people, “What more can I say? Go and do likewise.” Imagine running a country on the Beatitudes? Imagine responding to the frustrations of bureaucracy, the incompetence of some civil servants, or the dictates of government officials simply by following the message of Jesus in the Beatitudes? Naïve? Crazy? An impossible dream? Impractical? Absurd? Yet, the Beatitudes are the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. They are the heart of all of Jesus' teaching. †

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To be poor “in spirit” is to know that you need God.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Sacramentals: Channels of Grace in Everyday Life”

Prayers of Blessing—To bless may mean to grant some favor or gift, as when God blesses us with life and grace. It may mean to ask God, through prayer and ritual, to sanctify and show favor to someone or to make something holy, as when the priest blesses the congregation at the end of Mass or when we say “God bless you” to someone. This kind of blessing is also called a *benediction*. To bless may also mean to honor as holy by praising or glorifying, as when we bless the Lord. All good things come from God, the source of every favor and gift. Therefore, the blessing prayers of the Church bless people or things by invoking God's grace and sanctification upon them, and these prayers also bless God with words of praise and thanks.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Gracious God, you who have blessed us so richly, please give us the grace to be a blessing to others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 2–7

Monday, Presentation of the Lord: Mal 3:1–4 / Heb 2:14–18 / Lk 2:22–40 or 2:22–32

Tuesday, Weekday: 2 Sm 18:9–10, 14b, 24–25a, 30—19:3 / Mk 5:21–43

Wednesday, Weekday: 2 Sm 24:2, 9–17 / Mk 6:1–6

Thursday, St. Agatha:

1 Kgs 2:1–4, 10–12 / Mk 6:7–13

Friday, St. Paul Miki and Companions:

Sir 47:2–11 / Mk 6:14–29

Saturday, Weekday:

1 Kgs 3:4–13 / Mk 6:30–34



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