

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Beatitudes

Week 30

Blessed are Those Who Mourn

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Pray the Reflection on Blessed are Those Who Mourn.
- ❖ Pray using St. Ignatius' Prayer.
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we praise You. You are wise. In Your perfect plan, You invite us into Your life. You lovingly seek us in our daily lives and offer us the free gift of a relationship with You. Forgive us for the times we've failed to recognize and respond to Your call in our lives. In Your Scripture You tell us, "It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you." (John 15:16) Thank you for choosing us and inviting us into the adventure of following You. Help us to know, not just with our head but with our whole being, that You seek each one of us and call us to follow You as Your faithful disciples. Lord, give us the desire and dedication to follow You with all our hearts. Jesus, we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Reflection

Having reflected on how God loves us and Jesus calls us, we now examine those qualities and virtues disciples embody. These virtues are expressed in The Beatitudes.

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

No beatitude more fully fulfills the messianic hopes offered by Isaiah 61 than this:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me...
to announce a year of favor from the Lord
and a day of vindication by our God to comfort all who mourn;
to place on those who mourn in Zion a diadem instead of ashes,
to give them oil of gladness in place of mourning,
a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit.

(Isa. 61:1, 2 - 3)

At first, we might think this beatitude refers to God comforting one when mourning a loved one's death. Certainly, we do experience God's consolation during times of deep loss, but this is only one way the promise of the second beatitude is fulfilled.

This second beatitude touches us at the core of our human condition. "Those who mourn" is an inclusive grief that refers to the disenfranchised, contrite, and bereaved. It is an expression of the intense sense of loss, helplessness, and despair. A person who mourns is one who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others and does not flee from painful situations. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes. In this beatitude, Jesus praises those who enter into solidarity with the pain of the world and do not turn away.

The world, however, tells us to do the exact opposite; that entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life. The worldly person ignores problems of sickness or sorrow in the family, in the community or in the world. The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them. Much energy is expended on fleeing from situations of suffering in the belief that reality can be concealed. Jesus' promise to comfort those who mourn could not be more counterintuitive and more counter-cultural.

Yet our consolation comes from Jesus, not the world. Those who mourn discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief. A person who mourns is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.

What strikes you from this passage?

In what way does mourning with the pain and suffering in our world reflect the qualities of a disciple?

Reflection Using St. Ignatius' Prayer

In his Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius speaks of the “freedom of indifference or detachment (The First Principle and Foundation).” Those are pretty odd-sounding words – after all, why would we pray to be indifferent or detached? That sounds cold and uncaring. What Ignatius means is that we pray for balance in our lives. Knowing that we are loved by God and that everything we have is a gift from God, we pray to hold everything we have and everything we are in a certain balance, so that we may say “yes” to God’s personal call.

St. Ignatius taught that we are all created to be friends of Jesus, to be loved, to praise and to serve God. For each of us, how we live that out is different. When we live as God intends us to, when we grow in relationship with God, we are truly happy. When we allow ourselves and our lives and our hearts to become cluttered, we find ourselves out of balance. We all know what that feels like.

Our prayer is to give ourselves fully to whatever Jesus is calling us to do. For a few months now, we’ve been exploring God’s personal love for us. How do we respond to that? Hopefully we are moved to desire what God wants for us and reject that in our lives which causes us to be self-absorbed. Because the Lord loves and chooses us, we express our desire to love and choose him in response.

As you pray this week, consider St. Ignatius’ prayer. Consider what in your life leads you closer to Jesus, what gives you joy and new life. Pray about how God might be calling you to let go of something in your life in order to more freely say “yes” to Him.

Here are some passages from Sacred Scripture you may wish to pray with:

Isaiah 6:1 – 8: *“Here I am, send me.”*

Luke 10:1 – 12: *The Mission of the Seventy-Two*

John 21:15 – 19: *“Do you love me?”*

Mark 1:15 – 20: *The Call of the First Disciples*

Matthew 4:18 – 22: *The Call of Peter, James, and John*

John 1:35 – 42: *The First Disciples*

Mark 3:13 – 19: *The Mission of the Twelve*

Closing Prayer

Our Need For Thee

St. Francis of Assisi

In our ever-present need for thee: Beloved, let us know Your peace.
Let us be Your instruments that break every shackle,
for do not the caged ones weep.

And give us our inheritance of divine love so that we can forgive like You.
And let us be wise, so that we do not wed another's madness and then make them in debt to
us for the deep gash their helpless raging lance will cause.

Darkness is an unlit wick; it just needs Your touch, Beloved, to become a sacred flame.
And what sadness in this world could endure if it looked into Your eyes?

God is like a honeybee, He doesn't mind me calling Him that;
for when you are kind – sweet – He nears and can draw you into Himself.

What is there to understand of each other: if a wand turned the
sun into a moon would not the moon mourn the ecstatic effulgence it once was.
We are all in mourning for the experience of our essence we knew and now miss.
Light is the cure, all else a placebo.

Yes, I will console any creature before me that is not laughing or full of passion for their art
or life; for laughing and passion – beauty and joy – is our heart's truth,
all else is labor and foreign to the soul.

I have stood in His rain and now fill granaries as do the fertile plains;
giving is as natural to love as sound from the mouth.
There is a courageous dying, it is called effacement.
That holy death unfurls our spirit's wings and allows us to embrace God
even as we stand on earth.