

Review of the Beatitudes 1-3:

<p>BLESSING #1 <i>BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT</i></p>	<p>We're "poor" in spirit because we acknowledge that we are not self-sufficient and that we need God in our lives. We come to Him in childlike faith, knowing that we cannot make it on our own without Him.</p>
<p>PROMISE #1: <i>FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN</i></p>	<p>When we acknowledge the sovereignty of God over our lives we discover that He does not save us because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done for us. If we persevere in faith we are promised the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.</p>
<p>BLESSING #2: <i>BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN</i></p>	<p>As we yield to spiritual childhood, admitting poverty of spirit and kneeling in His presence, the more clearly we see God. The more clearly we see God the more we become aware of our imperfections. We become humbled in His presence and we feel the burden of our sins. The result is that we mourn our sins. Repentance and genuine sorrow for our sins purifies us. To mourn sin is a natural outflow of surrender to God through "poverty of spirit."</p>
<p>PROMISE #2: <i>FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED</i></p>	<p>Not only does the Holy Spirit comfort us in our sorrow and repentance, but through living the Sacraments of our faith He gives us the strength to resist sin and also the strength to stand against sin in our community and in the world. We bear our suffering with a spirit of atonement, reconciliation and love and the result is comfort and strength.</p>
<p>BLESSING #3: <i>BLESSED ARE THE MEEK</i></p>	<p>Christian "meekness" is not weakness. It is based on humility which is expressed in the New Testament as the supernatural quality that is the outgrowth of a renewed nature. This renewal can only come when we surrender our lives to God and seek His divine will in our lives. It is this third step, "<i>blessed are the meek</i>" which renews us and places us as a useful tool in the hands of the Master of the universe.</p>
<p>PROMISE #3" <i>FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND</i></p>	<p>No longer does Satan have the power to dominate us because we have been reborn through Christian baptism into the family of God. We belong to the God who created and dominates the earth, and as His children and his heirs we inherit the earth and the universal kingdom He has established on earth to lead the nations into the family of God, the Catholic Church.</p>

THE COVENANT ORDEAL

(an individual must have knowledge of what is God's will for his life
in righteous living)

GOD'S PLAN

THE WORD OF GOD/
CHURCH DOCTRINE

SUFFERING/
PERSONAL LOSS/
SACRIFICE

RESULT

SUCCESS IN
ETERNAL TERMS

THE WORLD'S PLAN

EARTHLY VALUES

EARTHLY
REWARDS

RESULT

SUCCESS IN
EARTHLY TERMS

EXAMPLES OF COVENANT ORDEAL

ADAM & EVE
(Genesis 3:1-24)

FAILURE

ABRAHAM & ISAAC
(Genesis 22:1-14)

SUCCESS

JESUS AT GETHSEME
(Matt. 28:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46)

SUCCESS

PETER AT THE JEWISH TRIAL OF JESUS
(Matt. 26:69-75; Mk.14:66-72; Lk. 22:55-62; Jn. 18:16-27)

FAILURE

STEPHEN AT HIS TRIAL BEFORE THE
JEWISH SANHEDRIN
(Acts 6:8-60)

SUCCESS

PETER AT HIS CRUCIFIXION
(after fleeing Rome returned to die as a martyr for Christ)
(*The Acts of Peter*)

SUCCESS

[See: www.earlychristianwriters.com/actspeter]

Handout #3, Lesson 6:

Questions for group discussion:

Question: There is always warfare between the material and the spiritual—between what the world interprets as pleasurable for us and what God tells us is righteous behavior. Nothing material is inherently evil; it is the application of the material that can be used for evil and not for the good. The amount of money we have isn't as important as our attitude toward it and the way we use it (see 1 Tim 6:10, Lk 12:48, and Mat 6:24). What is your attitude toward your money and material possessions?

Question: Why does Christ give Himself to us, body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Most Holy Eucharist?

Question: When does the sharing in the life of the Trinity began and how does it progress through our faith journey?

Question: How often are we to receive Christ in the Eucharist; the minimum and the recommended; what are the restrictions against receiving? See CCC # 2042; 1343;

Question: Is the Eucharist necessary for our salvation? Read John 6:41-58 (verse 57 is the key) and CCC #1324-27; 1341-44; 1389-1396; 2180.