

Called to be Saints

Living The Beatitudes



Praying with Mary

The Magnificat

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age
on those who fear him.
He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his descendants for ever. Amen.

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to your protection,
implored your help,
or sought your intercession, was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you,
O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.
To you do I come, before you I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Front cover image: The statues of Jesus and the twelve apostles on the Mount of Beatitudes, Israel

Panoramic view of the sea of Galilee from the Mount of Beatitudes, Israel



Introduction

Has anyone ever called you a saint? Do you ever describe your fellow parishioners as saints? Probably not. That type of talk makes us feel embarrassed and uncomfortable.

But calling other Christians saints was a common practice among members of the early church. The Acts of the Apostles describes Saul's persecution of the 'saints in Jerusalem' (Acts 9:13). Later in Acts, Paul admits that 'I put many of the saints in prison' (Acts 26:10). Paul ends his letter to the church in Philippi with the words, 'All the saints send you greetings...' (Phil 4:22).

Members of the early church referred to each other as saints. Saints were found among the spiritually weak and the spiritually strong, the educated and the uneducated, the poor and the well-off. Anyone baptised in the name of Jesus was among the saints.

Over the centuries, the understanding of sainthood narrowed, and it began to be applied only to certain exceptionally holy people. Church authorities took over the saint-making process and candidates had to meet specific criteria before being formally declared a saint.

Even though every year the feast of All Saints honours the multitude of ordinary saints who will never be

canonised, we tend to think of sainthood as applying only to a select few. Being canonised is not something the regular person puts on her bucket list.

Pope Francis wants to change this way of thinking. In March 2018, he published his third apostolic letter, entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), on our call to be saints. In the letter, he reminds us of the Second Vatican Council's teaching that "all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord—each in his or her own way—to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect."

Pope Francis is well aware that being holy is not easy and he suggests practical steps we can take to become saints. The key, he writes, is the beatitudes, which are the Christian's identity card.

This year's novena is about our call to holiness. Using *Gaudete et Exsultate* as our guide, we will examine the beatitudes as St Matthew lists them in the Sermon on the Mount.

We are not asked or expected suddenly to go around calling each other saints. But we are called to be saints. Living according to the beatitudes is how we do it.





The saint next door

The word

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up a mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown them.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny falsely against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.” Mt 5:1-12

The world as it is

When we think of saints, we usually think of a particular category of people. We think of those, mostly clergy and religious, who have been officially canonised by the church. Their lives were carefully scrutinised, their writings and actions thoroughly investigated, to be sure of their heroic virtues. The title of saint or blessed is accorded only to those outstanding in sanctity - mystics and martyrs and missionaries and pastors and founders of religious orders. It seems out of reach of the rest of us.

Pope Francis challenges this way of thinking. In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, he emphasises that “to be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious.” We do not have to be “swooning in mystic rapture” or walking around with “lowered eyes” to be a saint. Sanctity isn’t just for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. We are all “called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.”

Pope Francis reminds us that the call to holiness comes with baptism and that “in the church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness.”

To be holy
is to “bear witness” to God
in all that we do

Therefore, when we think of holiness, we should not “think only of those already beatified and canonised.” Nor should we grow discouraged by examples of holiness that appear unattainable. “The important thing,” Francis writes, “is that each believer discerns his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts, rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many ways of bearing witness.”

The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God’s faithful people.

The world as it should be

In today’s highly competitive, interconnected world, it’s easy to look at ourselves and think we don’t measure up. When it comes to our faith, we can feel the same way. How could I possibly be - or become - a saint? How could I meet the standards of Jesus? What’s the point in even trying?

In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis reminds us that “the Lord has chosen each of us ‘to be holy and blameless before him.’” Not only are we all called to be holy, we are also surrounded by people who are holy. “I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God’s people,” writes the Holy Father:

“in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile...Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence.”

The key to being a saint next door, Pope Francis states, is to live the beatitudes. The beatitudes are “the Christian’s identity card. If anyone asks: what must one do to be a good Christian?” then “the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount.”

We gain true happiness by aligning our wills and our actions with the will of God, as expressed in the beatitudes. “The word ‘happy’ or ‘blessed’ thus becomes a synonym for ‘holy,’” the Pope writes. “It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self-giving, gain true happiness.”

We are all called to be saints. The beatitudes show us the way.

The world that awaits

To be holy is to “bear witness” to God in all that we do. It is to live the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes, Pope Francis tells us, are our signpost to heaven.





Blessed are the poor in spirit...

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

The word

Jesus told them a parable: "There once was a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, 'What am I to do? I haven't enough room to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul. And this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves instead of becoming rich in the sight of God." Lk 12:16-21

The world as it is

Money, money, money

Must be funny

In the rich man's world.

Ah, all the things I could do

If I had a little money

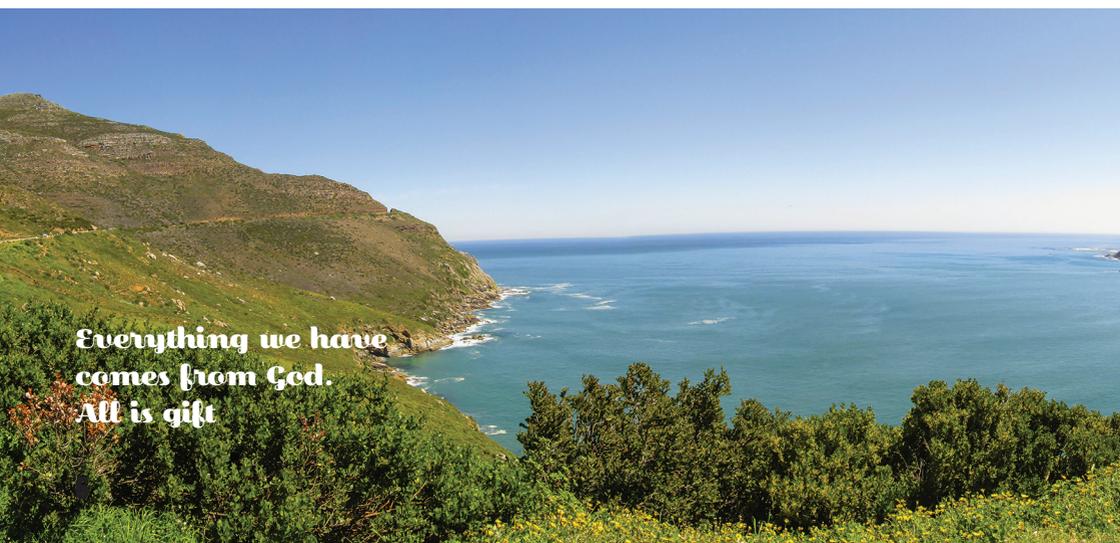
It's a rich man's world.

These lines from a song by Swedish super group, Abba, neatly describe humanity's fixation with money. Money is the answer to all life's problems, the key to happiness.

That's why the internet is full of get rich quick schemes; why we love 'rags to riches' stories of self-made billionaires like Jeff Bezos of Amazon; why we cling to the faint hope of winning the lottery or discovering an elderly rich relative. Finding ways to generate wealth is what keeps the international monetary system going.

Even those of us with no desire to be featured in the *Wall Street Journal* can get distracted by money. Seeking happiness, security, stability, we become grasping, hung up on our possessions, preoccupied with material things. Money becomes our focus.

This is understandable, since the world of commerce and advertising and Instagram promotes envy and the desire to have at least as much as our neighbours. We can become attached to money without even realising it. But Jesus challenges this way of thinking. The Gospel invites us, in the words of Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, "to peer into the depths of our heart, to see where we find our security in life. Usually the rich feel



Everything we have
comes from God.
All is gift

secure in their wealth, and think that, if that wealth is threatened, the whole meaning of their earthly life can collapse.” But wealth ensures nothing, Francis writes. Wealth makes it difficult for us to have room in our hearts for what really matters.

The world as it should be

On March 10, 2019, Michael Ryan was killed when the plane on which he was travelling crashed in Ethiopia. A native of County Clare, Michael was an engineer with the UN World Food Programme. The 39-year-old father of two had devoted his professional life to disaster and relief work. He used his knowledge to repair and restore and give hope. “He always put people first,” his mother said. He focused on helping others. He wanted to do all he could to build a better world.

Though he probably wouldn't have expressed it in those words, Michael Ryan was living the beatitudes. He was poor in spirit.

To be poor in spirit is to be indifferent to material things so as to have interior freedom, a heart that is poor. It is to have a commitment to justice and to the deprived. It is to empty oneself to let others in.

The world finds security in wealth, writes Pope Francis, but “once we think we are rich, we can become so self-satisfied that we leave no room for God's word, for

the love of our brothers and sisters, or for the enjoyment of the most important things in life.” We become self-absorbed, focused on what gives us pleasure, what enhances our comfort, rather than on what truly enriches our lives.

Poor in spirit is knowing our security comes from God rather than things. Poor in spirit means understanding a profound truth about ourselves - we did not bring ourselves into existence. We are not responsible for where we come from or the talents we possess. We are not responsible for the air we breathe or the wonders of the universe. Everything we have comes from God. All is gift. Poor in spirit is recognising our dependence on God at every moment of every day. It is to live in such a way that we allow nothing to supersede our relationship with God and our commitment to God's kingdom.

The world that awaits

In his version of the beatitudes, St Luke doesn't speak of being poor “in spirit,” but simply of those who are “poor.” Both versions are complementary. Jesus “invites us to live a plain and austere life,” writes Pope Francis, and “to share in the life of those most in need.” Those who are poor in spirit, who care for the poor, will enter the kingdom of heaven. Poverty of heart: that, the pope tells us, is holiness.





Blessed are the meek...

for they will inherit the earth

The word

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” Mt 11:28-30

The world as it is

A survey published last February highlighted some disturbing truths about Ireland today. It found that more than 50 per cent of immigrants had experienced racism in the past year. They had been discriminated against simply because of their ethnicity.

It’s an unfortunate fact that we live in a world where division and conflict abound. We can be arrogant and judgmental. We can consider ourselves superior to others. We can be impatient with those who don’t measure up to our standards. We can be condescending. We can be far from humble.

From the beginning, writes Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, “our world has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides, where we constantly

pigeonhole others on the basis of their ideas, their customs and even their way of speaking or dressing. Ultimately, it is the reign of pride and vanity, where each person thinks he or she has the right to dominate others.”

In the church we have also often erred by not embracing the demand to be meek, Pope Francis writes. All too often, church leaders have been arrogant and high-handed in their treatment of others. We should be meek “even when we defend our faith and convictions,” he advises, because meekness is the way of Jesus. “This is what we see him doing with his disciples. It is what we contemplate on his entrance to Jerusalem: ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey.’”

The world as it should be

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look on me a little child” is a prayer many of us learned in childhood. It portrays Jesus as soft and harmless, someone who could be easily pushed around. It’s a false portrayal. A harmless person would never get in trouble with the authorities. A soft

**Being meek is to be selfless.
It is to set aside
our obsessions and desires
to give ourselves for others**



person would never end up on a cross. Jesus showed that meekness is not cowardice.

A problem with the word ‘meek’ is that it rhymes with weak, and we can link the two together. A dictionary definition of meek is “too submissive; easily imposed on; spineless.” But the biblical definition is different. Meekness is not weakness or submissiveness. It’s not being soft or malleable. It is, rather, an attitude of humility toward God and gentleness toward all. It is strength and courage under control, and serenity in the face of difficulty. Meekness is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. According to Pope Francis, it is an expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone.

This beatitude is about humility, kindness, patience, and courage when needed. It is the obedience proper to a follower of Christ.

Jesus showed meekness in action. Again and again, he identified with the most humble. He chose the sick over the healthy, the weak over the powerful, the poor over the rich. He washed dirty feet. He mixed with outcasts. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, to show us the proper posture before God. He demonstrated the way of meekness.

Being meek is to be self-aware. It is knowing we are not perfect and are not superior to others. Every good we have is a gift, either directly from God or by means of

those who came before us. Meekness is recognising our smallness before God.

Being meek is to be selfless. It is to set aside our obsessions and desires to give ourselves for others. It is to wash feet.

Being meek is to be calm and self-possessed, not allowing ourselves to be easily agitated. “If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary,” states Pope Francis. “But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining.”

Being meek is how Christians relate to God and others.

The world that awaits

Pope Francis acknowledges that being meek is not popular. “The normal response,” he writes, “is, ‘If I am that meek, they will think that I am an idiot, a fool or a weakling.’” But, he goes on, “It is always better to be meek, for then our deepest desires will be fulfilled. The meek ‘shall inherit the earth,’ for they will see God’s promises accomplished in their lives.”

Reacting with meekness and humility: that, Pope Francis tells us, is holiness. It is our steppingstone to heaven.





Blessed are those who mourn...

for they will be comforted

The word

Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Luke 7:11-17

The world as it is

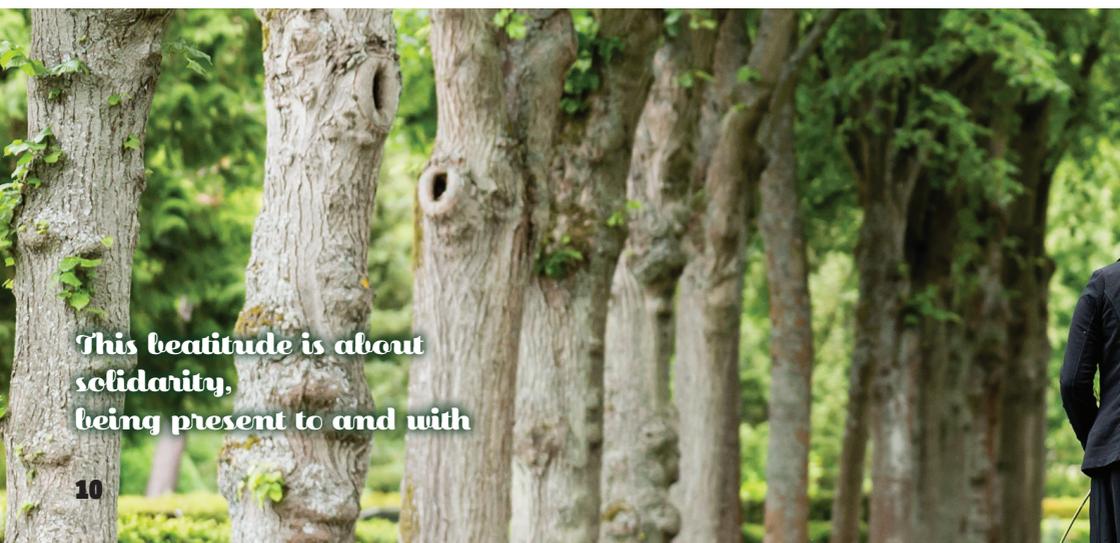
Death is a dirty word in Western culture today. We don't like thinking about it; we don't like talking about it; we don't want to confront it (though we're better at it in Ireland than in many other countries). We don't even like using the word 'die' or 'death.' We skirt around the subject by using euphemisms instead. And so, a loved one 'passes' or 'passes away' rather than 'dies.' The fact of death has been

sanitised as much as possible.

It's the same with suffering. We'd rather not be exposed to it. Some people refuse to visit hospitals or nursing homes because it is too distressing. There is an impulse to avoid, if possible, the reality of pain, of decay, of loss. We seek a sanitised version of life.

The same can be said about poverty. We don't want to be burdened by the misery of others. We don't want to have to witness their need. We don't want to be distressed by their distress. And that's understandable. We have enough problems of our own without also being expected to take on the pain of those who are poor or on the margins of society. That's the job of governments and charities.

Why should we have to share other people's tears? After all, as Pope Francis puts it in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, the world tells us that "entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life. The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them."



This beatitude is about solidarity, being present to and with

The world as it should be

Mourning takes many forms. We experience it not only for the death of loved ones, but also for the loss of places, times, abilities, dreams, missed opportunities. We can mourn the passage of the good old days when life seemed more stable and churches were full. Mourning stalks us.

Yet mourning doesn't sit well with modern society, as Pope Francis states. We'd rather avoid it, deny it, or get busy or distracted or high, so as to not have to deal with it. We seek to avoid anything that makes us uncomfortable.

The Christian attitude to mourning is different. Followers of Jesus "are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations," writes Pope Francis. "They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief."

This beatitude is about solidarity, being present to and with. It blesses those who are able to mourn for the suffering they witness all around them, those who are willing to share the other's pain.

Jesus mourned. He wept when he stood outside Lazarus' tomb. He wept when he looked over the city of Jerusalem. He always allowed the suffering

of others to touch him, even responding without being asked, as he did when he raised the widow's son.

Living this beatitude does not mean going around with long faces, our bodies trembling with sorrow and despair. It is, rather, a call to empathy. To act as Jesus acted. To feel distressed at the existence of so much pain in the world.

The violence, injustice, poverty and loss we see all around us are a call to open our hearts. "A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathises with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness," Pope Francis writes. Our empathy in action not only helps others but also deepens our own humanity and our capacity to love.

The world that awaits

Jesus promises that those who mourn will be comforted. While we know we cannot eliminate all the suffering in the world, our efforts do make a difference. Knowing this brings us real consolation in this life as well as the promise of comfort in the next.

Knowing how to mourn with others: that, writes Pope Francis, is holiness. It is a promise of heaven.





Blessed are the merciful...

for they will have mercy shown them

The word

[Jesus said,] “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.’”

Mt 25:31-40

The world as it is

Several months ago, after a prisoner was executed in Texas, a relative of his victims addressed the media. “Justice has been done at last,” he declared. “I believe in an eye for an eye.”

It’s an understandable sentiment. It is part of human nature to want to get even, to retaliate, to punish. Even though our Christian faith requires us to forgive, all too often, we are unable to let go of a hurt or betrayal. And all too often, the failure to forgive leads to even greater pain. We don’t need to be experts in international relations, or history, or human dynamics, to appreciate the consequences of our inability or unwillingness to promote reconciliation. Hitler’s anger at Jewish people and at the perceived injustice done to Germany after World War One resulted in the deaths of millions of innocent people.

We know how the failure to forgive can divide families and communities. We also know what happens when we lack compassion or understanding. We can put the law before people (a criticism levelled at those who oppose any ‘softening’ of church teaching on sexual

**Giving and forgiving means
reproducing in our lives
some small measure
of God’s perfection**



morality). Or we can be so focused on ourselves or uninterested in others that we turn a blind eye to the hungry, the sick, the stranger, the hurting. Their plight is none of our business, and so we ignore them.

The world as it should be

There are two aspects to mercy, writes Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exsultate*: “It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding.” It is the fulfilment of the golden rule: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Mercy is giving and forgiving. “Giving and forgiving,” explains Pope Francis, “means reproducing in our lives some small measure of God’s perfection, which gives and forgives superabundantly.”

To be merciful is to give. We have all been created in God’s image and likeness. We have been given and gifted so abundantly that we must give abundantly in return. We must treat everyone with the generosity, mercy and compassion we would like to receive.

Pope Francis offers the example of migrants. For Christians, he writes, “the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters

of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children. Can we not realise that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him?”

To be merciful is to forgive. “All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion,” he writes. No matter how often we let God down, God forgives us abundantly. We should think of ourselves, Francis says, “as an army of the forgiven.” And that must be our motive for forgiving. “We should, therefore, hear God saying to us, ‘Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’” We forgive abundantly because God has forgiven us abundantly.

Being merciful is giving and forgiving.

The world that awaits

Pope Francis reminds us of the words of St Luke: “The measure you give will be the measure you get back.” In other words, the yardstick we use for forgiving others will measure the forgiveness we receive from God. The yardstick we use for giving to others will measure what we receive.

Seeing and acting with mercy: that, Pope Francis assures us, is holiness. It is our promise of salvation.





Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...

for they will be satisfied

The word

{Jesus said}, "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house - for I have five

brothers - that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Lk 16:19-31

The world as it is

A new study shows how unequal our world is. The top 26 billionaires worldwide are as wealthy as 3.6 billion people, according to Oxfam International. The net worth of these 26 individuals reached \$1.4 trillion in 2018. Or, to put it another way, the world's 26 richest people own as much as the poorest 50 per cent. Billionaires, who now number a record 2,208, are growing \$2.5 billion richer every single day, while the net worth of the world's poorest half continues to dwindle. Since the recession of a decade ago, the number of billionaires has nearly doubled.

Meanwhile, at least 800 million people live in



**True justice comes about
in people's lives
when they themselves
are just in their decisions**

slum areas in cities, while corruption, abuse of power, discrimination and exploitation of the weak continue to wreck our world.

For all the progress humankind has made, for all our advances in technology and science, for all our development in human rights, there is a growing chasm between the haves and have-nots. Of course, the wealthy contribute millions to good causes, but charity is not justice. It merely perpetuates the current system.

In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis acknowledges how “easy it is to become mired in corruption, ensnared in the daily politics of *quid pro quo*, where everything becomes business.” As a result, he writes, “many people suffer injustice, standing by powerlessly while others divvy up the good things of this life. Some give up fighting for real justice and opt to follow in the train of the winners.”

This reality, Pope Francis points out, “is far removed from the hunger and thirst for justice that Jesus praises” in the beatitudes. It’s far removed from the reign of God.

The world as it should be

Called to live the beatitudes, Christians are people who work for justice. We cannot “uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in

abject poverty,” writes Pope Francis.

We cannot simply be interested in justice; we must hunger and thirst for it. “Hunger and thirst are intense experiences, since they involve basic needs and our instinct for survival,” writes Pope Francis. We must crave justice. We must long for it with all the longing of a starving person scavenging desperately for sustenance.

“True justice comes about in people’s lives when they themselves are just in their decisions; it is expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak,” the pope writes.

The church teaches that action for justice is a constitutive part of living the Gospel. It is not enough for us to tell the poor, the abused, the unfairly treated, that we will pray for them or give money to charity. We must have a deep yearning to confront injustice and its causes wherever we encounter it.

The world that awaits

Those who hunger and thirst for justice “will be satisfied, for sooner or later justice will come,” writes Pope Francis. To the extent we are able, we seek to live according to God’s standards of justice, “even if we may not always see the fruit of our efforts” in this life.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that, Pope Francis assures us, is holiness. It is our promise of eternal life.





Blessed are the pure in heart...

for they will see God

The word

A lawyer put a question too him, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Mt 22:36-40

The world as it is

For many Irish Catholics of yesteryear, the word 'pure' had only one meaning. It had to do with sex. To be pure was to be not defiled sexually. A popular prayer asked for the gift of 'holy purity.' Any activity outside of marriage that endangered one's virginity or chastity was frowned upon. A good Catholic was expected to practise modesty in dress and of the eyes and to avoid 'company keeping,' or any situation which endangered their purity.

The Irish Catholic Church and Irish society, until at least the 1960s, had a severely judgemental

attitude towards sex and sexual expression. It has been described as a censorious, closed-minded culture of squinting windows and banned books and hell-fire sermons, where even *The Irish Times* enthusiastically endorsed the 1930s' clampdown on dances.

We are still living with the troubled legacy of that time. Some scrupulous people still feel an overwhelming need to confess their every 'bad thought.' They worry to death even about the mildest sexual fantasies or actions they may not have properly confessed in the past. The Mother and Baby homes to which many young women were sent, and the shame associated with those homes, is another tragic legacy of this dark period.

Today, the prevailing attitude toward sexuality is different. Expressions like holy purity are rarely used anymore. There has been a widespread rejection of church teaching on sexual morality even by many who consider themselves good Catholics. We have gone from a largely repressive to a thoroughly permissive society.

The pure in heart are those who are distinguished by an upright integrity that seeks to be transparent even in small things

But today's beatitude was never intended to be solely about sexuality. Being pure in heart is more than simply living by a demanding code of sexual ethics. In the past, too much emphasis was placed on the word 'pure,' with its sexual connotations, and not enough on the word 'heart,' with its wider implications. But heart is key. To be pure in heart is to be whole of heart, a person of integrity.

The world as it should be

Throughout the Bible, there is a focus on the heart and its motives. As Pope Francis writes in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, the Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. "From the heart's intentions come the desires and the deepest decisions that determine our actions," he writes. The pure in heart are those who are distinguished by an upright integrity that seeks to be transparent even in small things. The pure in heart are those whose motivations are just and true.

Psalm 73 proclaims "truly God is good to the upright, to those who are pure in heart." To be upright and to be pure in heart is one and the same. Hypocrites are those who are not pure in heart, as Jesus says of the Pharisees, "These people honour me with their lips

but their hearts are far from me" (Mt 15:8).

Matthew's Gospel also tells us that it is what proceeds from the heart that defiles a person, for from the heart come murder, theft, false witness, and other evil deeds. From the heart's intentions come the desires and the deepest decisions that determine all our actions. So we must guard our hearts with vigilance (Prov 4:23).

"This beatitude reminds us that the Lord expects a commitment to our brothers and sisters that comes from the heart," writes Pope Francis. It reminds us not only to respect the gift of our sexuality but also to act always from honest and true motives.

"This beatitude speaks of those whose hearts are simple, pure and undefiled," states the popes, "for a heart capable of love admits nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love."

The world that awaits

A heart that loves God and neighbour, genuinely and not merely in words, is one that is pure. Jesus promises that those who are pure in heart "will see God."

Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that, Pope Francis tells us, is holiness. It is the guarantee we will see God face to face.





Blessed are the peacemakers...

for they will be called children of God

The word

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." Jn 20:19-21

The world as it is

The economic collapse in Venezuela last spring was so severe that women resorted to selling their hair. Desperate for money for necessities or to flee the country, they gave up one of the possessions Venezuelan women prize most of all. It was all they had left to give, the price of political and civil unrest.

Seventy-five years after the fall of Hitler, anti-Semitism is on the rise again. Jews are being targeted, their businesses and even their graves attacked, simply because they are Jews. In America and beyond, racial tensions are also brimming over. Last February, a white

newspaper owner in Alabama called on the Ku Klux Klan to ride into Washington DC and hang liberals from trees.

Across the Middle East, war has obliterated cities and wiped out families, creating more displaced people than at any time since the 1940s. Bullying, domestic violence, xenophobia, homophobia, sexual exploitation and discrimination are as rampant today as ever. It's estimated that every year more than 2.5 million girls and young women are trafficked as sex slaves for the pleasure of men.

An uneasy restlessness also wearies our high-tech, media savvy world. The fear of missing out, the need to be continuously occupied, entertained, distracted or titillated, an inability to be still, to escape the noise, make it difficult for us to be at peace. Social media has facilitated an explosion of hate speech, while love of gossip continues to destroy lives. In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis begins his reflection on peace-making by highlighting the danger of gossip. "The world of gossip," he writes, is "inhabited by negative and destructive people." Such people "are really the enemies of peace."

For all our sophistication, it seems that conflict,



To be effective peacemakers,
we must be at peace
with ourselves

division, violence, tribalism, anger, hatred, and revenge are deeply ingrained in our human DNA. Peace is difficult to enjoy or make.

The world as it should be

For Pope Francis, peace covers everything from gossip to war. It applies to our thoughts and attitudes as much as to our words and actions. “Peacemakers truly ‘make’ peace,” Francis writes; “they build peace and friendship in society.” Jesus told his disciples that, wherever they went, they were to say: “Peace to this house!” The word of God urges every believer to work for peace, the pope says, and “if there are times in our community when we question what ought to be done, ‘let us pursue what makes for peace’ (Rom 14:19), for unity is preferable to conflict.”

Pope Francis acknowledges that it is difficult to make an “evangelical peace, which excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life or simply uninterested.” We must be artisans of peace, he writes, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill.

We are peacemakers, first, by knowing that peace is God’s gift to us. It is how the resurrected Lord greeted his disciples: “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.”

It is what we pray for in the liturgy: “The peace of the Lord be with you.” Peace is a gift of our faith.

Second, to be effective peacemakers, we must be at peace with ourselves. God is the source of peace and calls us to exhibit peace in our own lives. Anger, resentment, failure to forgive, self-pity, lust, restlessness, self-obsession, jealousy, envy, greed, self-harm, regret - all can keep us from experiencing peace. But the resurrected Lord assures us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Troubled hearts are an obstacle to peace. We can only work toward peace if we are at peace.

Third, we live this beatitude when we seek to make peace in our family, community, workplace, parish, and beyond. A peacemaker actively works toward peace. A peacemaker never stops working toward peace. Whether it is to build peace between two people or two families or two tribes or two nations, peace is part of our message to the world.

The world that awaits

Sowing peace all around us: that, Pope Francis writes, is holiness. Jesus promises those who sow peace that they will be called “children of God.” To be acknowledged as a child of God is the best reward any of us could receive. It is our promise of heaven.





Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake...

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

The word

[Jesus said], "Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of righteousness: the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward will be great in heaven, this is how they persecuted the prophets before you." Mt 5:10-12

The world as it is

The monks had a major decision to make. An Islamic insurgency was taking place in Algeria, and many lives were being lost. A community of French Trappist monks had lived in the monastery of Tibhirine for decades, in harmony with the local Muslim population. Now, their harmony was being disrupted, and the monks had to decide whether to get out of the country. They chose to remain. Despite the growing danger, they decided to stand in solidarity with the townspeople. They agreed on the moral importance of maintaining their presence with the locals, even when faced with violence and death. On

the night of 26–27 March 1996, terrorists seized seven of the monks and took them away. Two months later, their bodies were discovered. They had given their lives out of love for God and God's people.

Like those Trappist monks, countless Christians have given their lives for the Gospel over the centuries. It is still happening. If anything, the numbers are increasing. Remember Fr Jacques Hamel, the elderly French priest murdered in July 2016 while he celebrated Mass in a Normandy church. Or the image of a long line of young men kneeling in an arid desert, each with an executioner standing behind him. They were being martyred simply because they were Coptic Christians.

Martyrdom takes other forms, too. As Pope Francis states in *Gaudete et Exsultate*: "Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people 'utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.' At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes

Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification



that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous.”

In our modern society, to say you are a practising Catholic is to invite scorn. A backlash against the church’s past abuse of power has led to a widespread renunciation of all it stands for. National and social media are especially hostile to the church and religion. It is a cold climate for people of faith.

The world as it should be

This final beatitude refers to two types of persecution - martyrdom and suffering for the sake of the kingdom. It’s unlikely any of us will die for our faith, but it’s very likely we will be asked to suffer the second type of martyrdom - the opposition that comes from being identified as Christian.

Being a Christian isn’t easy. “Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance,” writes Pope Francis. “He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others. Unless we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for ‘whoever would save his life will lose it.’

“In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests

often stands in our way,” warns Pope Francis. Living the beatitudes “will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspicion, and met with ridicule.

“Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification,” Francis writes. “We must never forget that when the New Testament tells us that we will have to endure suffering for the Gospel’s sake, it speaks precisely of persecution.”

Think of Mary at the foot of the cross, heartbroken as she watched her son die. But she trusted in God and was crowned queen of heaven. Like Mary and countless Christians after her, we are happy to endure pain, suffering, and rejection for the sake of God’s kingdom.

The world that awaits

The title of Pope Francis’ letter on holiness is Rejoice and be glad. These encouraging words, taken from today’s beatitude, are spoken by Jesus to those persecuted for his sake. He asks us to follow him faithfully, and, in return, he offers us the happiness for which we were created.

Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: this, Francis tells us, is holiness. It’s our promise of entry into heaven.



1 Abide with me,

fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens, Lord,
with me abide!
When other helpers fail,
and comforts flee,
help of the helpless,
O abide with me.

I need thy presence
every passing hour;
what but thy grace
can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself
my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine,
O abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross
before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom
and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks,
and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord,
abide with me

2 Ag Críost an síol, ag Críost an

fómhar;
in iothlainn Dé go dtugtar sinn.
Ag Críost an mhuir, ag Críost an
t-iasc;
i líonta Dé go gcastar sinn.
Ó fhás go haois is ó aois go bás,
do dhá láimh, a Chríost, anall
tharainn.
Ó bhás go críoch ní críoch ach
athfhás,
i bParthas na ngrás go rabhaimid.

3 Let us build a house where love can

dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and
visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end
divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where
prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to
seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as
witness
and a symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of
Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

4 All that I am, all that I do,

All that I'll ever have,
I offer now to you.
Take and sanctify these gifts
for your honour, Lord.
Knowing that I love and serve you
is enough reward.
All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have I offer now
to you.

All that I dream,
all that I pray,
all that I'll ever make,
I give you today.
Take and sanctify these gifts
for your honour, Lord.
Knowing that I love and serve you
is enough reward.
All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have I offer now
to you.

5 Amazing Grace,

how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now, I see.

T'was Grace that taught
my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and
snares
we have already come.
T'was Grace that brought us safe
thus far
and Grace will lead us home.

The Lord has promised good to me;
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

6 As I kneel before you,

As I bow my head in prayer,
Take this day, make it yours,
And fill me with your love.

***Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum, benedicta tu.***

All I have I give you,
Ev'ry dream and wish are yours
Mother of Christ, Mother of mine,
Present them to my Lord.

As I kneel before you,
And I see your smiling face,
Ev'ry thought, ev'ry word
is lost in your embrace.

7 Ave Maria, shadows are falling;

Star of the evening, hear us now
calling:
Lead us to find our peace in God only.
Ave Maria, Ave.

Moon in our darkness, through the
night gleaming,
calm may our rest be, tranquil our
dreaming.
Shine for the fearful, shine for the
lonely.
Ave Maria. Ave.

Lady of silence, God's Word
revealing,
lay your hands on us, all our ills
healing.
Bless us tonight (today) and in our
last sleeping.
Ave Maria. Ave.

8 You shall cross the barren desert,

but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words in
foreign lands
and all will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.

***Be not afraid, I go before you
always.
Come follow me, and I will give
you rest.***

If you pass through raging waters
in the sea, you shall not drown.
If you walk amid the burning
flames,
you shall not be harmed.
If you stand before the power of hell,
and death is at your side,
know that I am with you through
it all.

9 Be still for the Presence of the Lord,

the Holy One is here.
Come, bow before him now
with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found,
we stand on holy ground.
Be still for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.
He burns with holy fire,
with splendour He is crowned.

How awesome is the sight,
our radiant King of light!
Be still for the glory of the Lord is
shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.
He comes to cleanse and heal,
to minister his Grace.
No work too hard for Him –
in faith, receive from Him.
Be still for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.

**10 Bind us together, Lord, bind us
together,
with cords that cannot be broken;
bind us together, Lord, bind us
together, Lord,
bind us together with love.**

There is only one God,
there is only one King,
there is only one Body,
that is why we sing.

You are the family of God,
You are the promise divine,
You are God's chosen desire,
You are the glorious new wine.

11 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;

continued on the next page

11 we are here to help each other
continued walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

12 **Céad míle fáilte romhat,**
a Íosa, a Íosa
Céad míle fáilte romhat, a Íosa.
Céad míle fáilte romhat,
a Shlánaítheoir,
Céad míle, míle fáilte romhat,
a Íosa, a Íosa

Glóir agus moladh duit,
a Íosa, a Íosa.
Glóir agus moladh duit, a Íosa.
Glóir agus moladh duit,
a Shlánaítheoir,
Glóir, moladh, agus búiochas duit,
a Íosa, a Íosa

13 **Christ be beside me,**

Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me,
King of my heart.
Christ be within me,
Christ be below me,
Christ be above me,
never to part.

Christ on my right hand,
Christ on my left hand.
Christ all around me,
shield in the strife.
Christ in my sleeping,
Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising,
light of my life.

Christ be in all hearts
thinking about me,
Christ be in all tongues
telling of me,
Christ be the vision
in eyes that see me,
in ears that hear me,
Christ ever be.

14 **Come as you are,**

that's how I want you.
Come as you are, feel quite at home.
Close to my heart, loved and forgiven,
Come as you are, why stand alone.

No need to fear, love sets no limits,
No need to fear, love never ends.
Don't run away, shamed and
disheartened
Rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to call sinners,
not just the virtuous.
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail, to live by my promise,
Why do you think I'd love you the less.

Come as you are, that's how I love you,
Come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I
bear you,
All will be well, come as you are.

15 **Diverse in culture,** nation, race,

We come together by your grace.
God, let us be a meeting ground
Where hope and healing love are found.
God, let us be a bridge of care
Connecting people everywhere.
Help us confront all fear and hate
And lust for power that separate.

When chasms widen, storms arise,
O, Holy Spirit, make us wise.
Let our resolve, like steel, be strong
To stand with those who suffer wrong.

God, let us be a table spread
With gifts of love and broken bread,
Where all find welcome, grace attends,
And enemies arise as friends.

16 **Give me joy in my heart,** keep me

singing,
Give me joy in my heart, I pray,
Give me joy in my heart, keep me
singing,
Keep me singing till the break of day.

*Sing Hosanna, Sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the King of Kings.
Sing Hosanna, Sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the King.*

Give me faith in my heart, keep me
searching...

Give me hope in my heart, keep me
striving...

Give me love in my heart, keep me
serving...

17 Hail, Queen of heav'n,

the ocean star,
guide of the wanderer here below
thrown on life's surge,
we claim thy care;
save us from peril and from woe.
Mother of Christ, star of the sea,
pray for the wanderer, pray for me.

O gentle, chaste and spotless maid,
we sinners make our prayers
through thee;
remind thy Son that he has paid
the price of our iniquity.
Virgin most pure, star of the sea,
pray for the sinner, pray for me.

18 Hail Redeemer, King divine!

Priest and Lamb, the throne is thine;
King, whose reign shall never cease,
Prince of everlasting peace.

*Angels, saints and nations sing;
"Praise be Jesus Christ our King;
Lord of life, earth, sky and sea,
King of love on Calvary!"*

King whose name creation thrills,
rule our minds, our hearts, our wills,
till in peace each nation rings
with thy praises, King of kings.

19 I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

*I have heard You calling in the
night.*

I will go, Lord, if You lead me.

I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them,
Whom shall I send?

**20 O Lord my God, when I in awesome
wonder,**

Consider all the works thy hands
have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling
thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe
displayed.

*Then sings my soul,
my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art,
how great thou art.
Then sings my soul,
my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art,
how great thou art!*

And when I think, that God his Son
not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly
bearing,
He bled and died, to take away
my sin.

21 How lovely on the mountains are

the feet of him,
who brings good news, good news,
announcing peace, proclaiming
news of happiness.
Our God reigns, our God reigns

*Our God reigns, our God reigns.
Our God reigns, our God reigns.*

You watchmen lift your voices
joyfully as one;
shout for your King, your King
See eye to eye the Lord restoring
Zion,
our God reigns, our God reigns!

22 In Christ there is no east or west,
in Him no south or north;
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts everywhere
their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
close-binding humankind.

Join hands, then, members of the faith
whatever your race may be!
Who serve each other in Christ's love
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north;
all Christly souls are one in him
throughout the whole wide earth.

23 I will never forget you, my people;
I have carved you on the palm of
my hand.
I will never forget you, I will not
leave you orphaned.
I will never forget my own.

Does a mother forget her baby?
Or a woman the child within her
womb?
Yet even if these forget, yes even if
these forget,
I will never forget my own.

24 *Let us be bread,
blessed by the Lord,
broken and shared, life for the world.
Let us be wine, love freely poured.
Let us be one in the Lord.*

I am the bread of life, broken for all.
Eat now and hunger no more.

See how my people have nothing
to eat.
Give them the bread that is you.

25 **Nearer, my God, to Thee,**
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me.
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Deep in Thy Sacred Heart,
Let me abide;
Thou that hast bled for me,
Sorrowed and died,
Sweet shall my weeping be,
Grief surely leading me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

26 **Make me a channel of your peace.**
Where there is hatred,
let me bring your love.
Where there is injury your pardon, Lord.
And where there's doubt true faith
in you.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me
bring hope.
Where there is darkness only light
and where there's sadness ever joy.

Oh, Master, grant that I may never
seek
so much to be consoled as to
console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my
soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
it is in pardoning that we are
pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to
eternal life.

27 **Bring flowers of the rarest,**
Bring blossoms the fairest,
From garden and woodland and
hillside and dale;
Our full hearts are swelling,
Our glad voices telling
The praise of the loveliest flower of
the vale.

*O Mary, we crown thee
with blossoms today,
Queen of the Angels and Queen of
the May,
O Mary, we crown thee
with blossoms today,
Queen of the Angels and Queen of
the May*

Their lady they name thee,
Their mistress proclaim thee,
Oh, grant that thy children on earth
be as true

As long as the bowers
Are radiant with flowers
As long as the azure shall keep its
bright hue.

28 *Salve Mater,*

*The Mother of our Lord:
Virgin Mary,
The Mother of our God.
Eyes so tender
That turn to all our cares,
Heart so ready
To run to all our prayers.
O Maria.*

Mary, blessèd one,
To us you always run:
We are to you
As Christ, your only Son:
Perpetual Help,
You're with us in our tears:
We place our hands
In yours with all our fears.
O Maria! **R/.**

Sister of all flesh,
So human with us all,
Disciples too,
We're gathered by our call;
Perpetual Help
You are to us indeed:
We'll watch with you
For all who are in need.
O Maria! **R/.**

Mother of our God,
No honour could be more:
If we had words

As grains upon the shore,
If we had tongues
As there are blades of grass,
No higher praise
Would ever come to pass.
O Maria! **R/.**

29 **Seek ye first** the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added
unto you.
Allelu, Alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you.
Seek and you shall find.
Knock and the door shall be opened
unto you.
Allelu, Alleluia.

We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word;
that proceeds from the mouth of
the Lord.
Allelu, Alleluia.

30 **Soul of my Saviour,**
sanctify my breast;
Body of Christ, be thou my saving
guest;
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in
thy tide
wash me ye waters flowing from
his side.

Strength and protection may thy
Passion be;
O blessed Jesus hear and answer me;
deep in thy wounds, Lord, hide and
shelter me;

so shall I never, never part from thee.
Guard and defend me from the foe
malign;
in death's dread moments make me
only thine;
call me, and bid me come to thee
on high,
where I may praise thee with thy
saints for aye.

31 **Sweet sacrament divine,**
hid in thy earthly home,
lo, round thy lowly shrine,
with suppliant hearts we come;
Jesus, to thee our voice we raise,
with songs of love and heartfelt praise,
sweet sacrament divine,
sweet sacrament divine.

Sweet sacrament of peace,
dear home of ev'ry heart,
where restless yearnings cease,
and sorrows all depart,
there in thine ear all trustfully
we tell our tale of misery,
sweet sacrament of peace,
sweet sacrament of peace.

32 **The love I have for you, my Lord,**
is only a shadow of your love for me:
only a shadow of your love for me;
your deep abiding love.

My own belief in you, my Lord,
is only a shadow of your faith in me;
only a shadow of your faith in me;
your deep and lasting faith.

continued on the next page

32 My life is in your hands;
continued my life is in your hands.
My love for you will grow, my God.
Your light in me will shine.

The dream I have today, my Lord,
is only a shadow of your dreams
for me;
only a shadow of all that will be;
if I but follow you.

33 **Take our bread**, we ask you,
take our hearts, we love you,
take our lives, oh Father,
we are yours, we are yours.

Yours as we stand at the table you set,
yours as we eat the bread our
hearts can't forget.
We are the signs of your life with
us yet;
we are yours, we are yours.

34 **The bells of the Angelus**
callesth to pray.
In sweet tones announcing the
sacred Ave.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

Immaculate Mary, our hearts are
all thine.
Protect us, thy children, who kneel
at thy shrine.

35 **This is my body**,
broken for you,
bringing you wholeness,

making you free.
Take it and eat it,
and when you do,
do it in love for me.

This is my blood,
poured out for you,
bringing forgiveness,
making you free.
Take it and drink it,
and when you do,
do it in love for me.

Back to my Father
soon I shall go.
Do not forget me;
then you will see
I am still with you,
and you will know
you're very close to me.

Filled with my Spirit,
how you will grow!
You are my branches;
I am the tree.
If you are faithful,
others will know
you are alive in me.

Love one another –
I have loved you,
and I have shown you
how to be free;
serve one another,
and when you do,
do it in love for me.

36 **Let's all join together**
in communion sweet,
Walk, walk in the light.
And love one another till the
Saviour we meet,
Walk, walk, in the light.

Walk in the light
Walk in the light
Walk in the light
Walk in the light of God.

Jesus died on Calvary,
Walk, walk, in the light,
To save the lost like you and me;
Walk, walk, in the light.

Jesus did what He said,
Walk, walk, in the light,
He healed the sick and He raised
the dead;
Walk, walk, in the light.

37 **When creation was begun**,
God had chosen you to be
Mother of his blessed Son,
Holy Mary, full of grace.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

When creation was restored,
You were there beside the Lord
Whom you cherished and adored,
Holy Mary, full of grace.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

All of us are children too,
often doubtful what to do,
Needing to confide in you,
Holy Mary, full of grace.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

38 **You who dwell**
in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in his shadow for life,
say to the Lord: “My refuge, my rock
in whom I trust!”

*And he will raise you up on eagles’
wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his
hand.*

The snare of the fowler will never
capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear:
under his wings your refuge, his
faithfulness your shield.

You need not fear the terror of the
night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
though thousands fall about you,
near you it shall not come.

Chants & Responses

39 Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your church,
gathered today.

40 My soul is longing for your peace
Near to you my God.

41 Guiding me, guarding me, the Lord
is by my side.
Guiding me, guarding me, the Lord
upholds my life.

42 I will search in the silence for your
hiding place.
In the quiet, Lord, I seek your face.

43 Even though the rain hides the
stars,
even though the mist swirls the
hills,
even when the dark clouds veil
the sky,
God is by my side.

Even when the sun shall fall in
sleep,
even when at dawn the sky shall
weep,
even in the night when storms
shall rise,
God is by my side.
God is by my side.

44 Bless the Lord my soul
and bless God’s holy name.
Bless the Lord my soul,
He leads me into life.

45 Be still and know that I am God.
(sing 3 times)
I am the Lord that healeth thee.
(sing 3 times)
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.
(sing 3 times)

46 Confitemini Domino,
quoniam bonus.
Confitemini Domino,
Alleluia.

47 Eat this bread,
drink this cup,
come to me and never be hungry.
Eat this bread,
drink this cup,
trust in me and you will not thirst.

48 O Christe Domine Jesu,
O Christe Domine Jesu.

49 Father, we adore you.
Lay our lives before you.
How we love you.
(Jesus, Spirit)

50 Father, we love you,
we worship and adore you,
Glorify thy name through all the earth.
Glorify thy name,
glorify thy name,
Glorify thy name through all the
earth. (Jesus, Spirit).

51 In the Lord
I’ll be ever thankful,
in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God,
do not be afraid;
lift up your voices,
the Lord is near;
lift up your voices
the Lord is near.

52 Jesus,
name above all names,
beautiful Saviour,
glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us,
blessed Redeemer,
living Word.

53 Jesus, remember me
when you come into your
Kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your
Kingdom.

54 Lay your hands gently upon us.
Let their touch render your peace.
Let them bring your forgiveness
and healing.
Lay your hands gently,
lay your hands.

55 Misericordias Domini
In aeternum cantabo

56 O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
when I call answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
come and listen to me.

57 Open our eyes, Lord,
we want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch him
and say that we love him;
open our ears, Lord,
and help us to listen;
open our eyes, Lord,
we want to see Jesus.

58 Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me. (sing twice)
Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
(...on us, on all)

59 Sweep over my soul, (sing twice)
Sweet Spirit,
sweep over my soul,
my rest is complete
when I sit at your feet,
Sweet Spirit
sweep over my soul.

60 Ubi caritas et amor,
Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

61 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
that I might serve you.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
that I might be renewed.
So fill me, heal me,
then bring me back to you.
Create in me a pure heart, O God,
that I might serve you.

62 Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

63 Faithful is the Lord, our King.
Let us all in glory sing,
ever praise in song and word:
Holy, holy, holy Lord!

64 Salvator mundi, salva nos;
qui per crucem et sanguinem
redemisti nos,
auxiliare nobis, te deprecamur,
Deus noster.

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NOVENA PRAYER

Mother of Perpetual Help,
with the greatest confidence
we come before your holy picture
to be inspired by the example of your life.
We think of you at that moment when,
full of faith and trust,
you accepted God's call
to be the mother of his Son.
Help us, your children,
to accept with joy our own calling in life.
When you learned that your cousin
Elizabeth was in need
you immediately went to serve her
and offer your help.
Help us, like you,
to be concerned for others.
We think of you, Mother,
at the foot of the cross.
Your heart must have bled
to see your Son in agony.
But your joy was great
when he rose from the dead,
victorious over the powers of evil.
Mother of Sorrows,
help us through the trials and
disappointments of life.
Help us not to lose heart.
May we share with you and your Son
the joy of having courageously faced up
to all the challenges of life.
Amen.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help,
with grateful hearts we join you
in thanking God
for all the wonderful things
he has done for us,
especially for giving us
Jesus, your Son, as our Redeemer.
O God, our Creator,
we thank you for the gift of life
and all the gifts of nature:
our senses and faculties,
our talents and abilities.
We thank you for creating us
in your image and likeness
and for giving us this earth
to use and develop,
to respect and cherish.
Despite our failures,
you continue to show your love for us
today
by increasing the life of your Spirit in us
at the Eucharistic table.
Finally, we thank you, loving Father,
for giving us Mary,
the Mother of your Son,
to be our Mother of Perpetual Help.
We are grateful for all the favours
we have received through her
intercession.
We pray that those past favours
may inspire us
to greater confidence in your loving mercy
and to seek the aid
of our Mother of Perpetual Help.
Amen.

