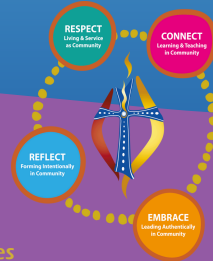


Family Prayer

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of this land, the Traditional Custodians who celebrated the wisdom, insight, and knowledge of their ancestors. We recognise their indelible connection to the land, seas, skies, and waterways now known as Australia. We show respect to the Elders who shared the memories, traditions, and stories of the First People, and endured losses too. May we hold their grief with loving compassion, and journey together towards a hope-filled, healing future.



Context - The Feast of All Saints

On November 1st we celebrate All Saints Day, a day where we honour holy people who the church has identified as saints and martyrs. We are encouraged to attend Mass (it is a [holy day of obligation](#)), to pray with a saint, read about a saint's life or read a book written by one of the saints. Pope Francis reminds us that the call to holiness, answered in earnest by those who have been declared saints, is one that is gifted to all of us and can be lived through our witness to the Christian hope of resurrection and dedication to lives promoting justice and peace. The Gospel of the day, the Beatitudes, are considered a template for living a Christ like life and although the language used requires some discern, it is worth the wrestle.

Scripture

Matthew 5:1-12a

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.

He said:

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

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

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

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

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

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

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

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets
who were before you.



Figure 1

By Fra Angelico - Originally from [en.wikipedia](#); description page is/was [here](#). Transfer was stated to be made by User:richardprins, Original uploader was Sampo Torgo at [en.wikipedia](#) <https://www.wga.hu/html/a/angelico/00/11/fieso2.html>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3000363>



Reflection

by Nadine Grant – Consultant Formation Identity and Outreach

Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12a), using some phrases that could be easily misunderstood or misinterpreted in modern society. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (v.5) is one such statement. Meek is defined by an online dictionary as quiet, gentle and easily imposed on; submissive. [1]Pope Francis shares a different definition of meekness, one I much prefer, “The meek are those who know how to control themselves, who leave space for others, who listen to them and respect their way of living, their needs and their requests.”[2] The meek are not weak, they are quietly strong. They know that a moment of anger can destroy a relationship and too often we see this in our own lives and in the world around us. The rhyme, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me,” could not be further from the truth. Name calling and labelling; response in anger to differences of opinion or religious beliefs; reacting in violence when threatened, are all actions that are the opposite to meekness. Israel or Palestine, Russia or Ukraine, black or white, right or wrong- binary thinking is the opposite to meekness. People are hurt, places are destroyed, and even lives can be lost when control is lost. Pope Francis again offers wisdom on this topic, “...in the world where there is much aggressiveness, in everyday life as well, the first thing to come out of us is aggression, defensiveness. We need meekness to move forward on the path of holiness. To listen, to respect, not to attack: meekness.”[3] Whilst the title “saint” is reserved for those whose lives the Church has thoroughly investigated, the term “communion of saints” applies to anyone who is in heaven and those of us physically on earth, striving for lives of goodness, justice and love in Jesus’ name. My renewed commitment as part of this communion, and on this Feast Day of All Saints, is to intentionally practice meekness. Not as a person with my head hung low, passively accepting but as the Greek word *parousia* denotes- a person of gentleness flowing from inner strength, the opposite of ‘grasping’. As Brendan Byrne writes, “the meek do not have to ‘have it all now’ at the expense of others.”[4]

Secondly, I spend time in prayer and contemplation remembering loved ones who are no longer with me in the physical realm.

Frank Moloney

Jesus is not weeping over the loss of his friend...Jesus the resurrection and the life is is angered, deeply moved and he weeps, as all attempts to lead his disciples, Martha and Mary to a true understanding of life and death meet failure.

Amy Jill Levine “Light of the World: A Beginners guide to Advent”

The Jewish *yizkor* service held four times a year in which we Jews recall family members and friends and other members of the community, especially the martyrs from the six million killed in the Shoah and to other more recent religiously motivated deaths of Jewish people. The service is not simply one of commemoration; we also pledge to honour that memory by giving to charity and doing works of righteousness. In that way the name of the deceased can be a blessing.

Dr Barbara Holmes Centre for Action and Contemplation speaks of death being only frightening when we think of it as a dash between the birth date and the death date. If that’s all it is then it is certainly something to be concerned about. She says that if we are one with all creation, if our bodily systems include stars long gone, the breath of God, tiny, interconnected particles of energy, if we are embodied universes then all will be well when the journey is complete.

Encouragement from cultural traditions that believe life is a continuum.

James Finlay faculty member Centre for Action and Contemplation

What is trustworthy about death?

Prayer

Jesus, Son of God and model of meekness,
In a culture that values the possession of power
and influence,
Lead us to choose listening over defensiveness,
Peace over aggression,
Meekness over division and dominance.
Help us to relearn tenderness... for ourselves and
for our world.

Amen

Call to Action

- Take some time to read about the many saints who embodied the strength of meekness on websites such as [Catholic Online](#) and [My Catholic Kids](#).
- For another contemporary perspective on living the Beatitudes, read the reflection, [Blessed are the Meek - Saving the Tradition](#) by Joan Chittister.
- Consider an artistic reflection of the Beatitudes through the paintings of [Hyatt Moore](#).
- Discover and dialogue about who is represented in the [Communion of Saints](#)
- tapestries at Our Lady of Angels Cathedral, Los Angeles.
- Read more about [All Saints Day](#)



Figure 2
Sermon On the Mount. Fine Art. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest, Accessed October 29, 2024. https://quest.eb.com/images/107_3363656.

References

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- [4] Brendan Byrne, *Lifting the Burden: Reading Matthew's Gospel in the Church Today*, (Strathfield: St Paul's Publications), 2004, 56.

