

How often have you heard the Beatitudes? I wonder, have we heard them so much that we now fail to hear them?

The Beatitudes are a self-portrait of Jesus. The beatitudes are the invitation of Jesus to us to be like him. The beatitudes are not of the past, or even of the future; they are now! I would guess that when we hear the beatitudes we postpone them to future, won't that be nice when...

But the beatitudes are about now. Think back to when you were a child, when you were told to eat your carrots, to improve your eyesight. Eat those vegetables *now* and enjoy some postponed future happiness. But the radical power of Jesus' teaching is that **now**, in **this** moment, in your poverty, you will know the reign of God; in your hunger, you shall be filled; in your weeping, you will experience happiness; and in your persecution, you shall have joy!

Maybe the *now* sense of what Jesus is saying in the beatitudes has been lost in the translations that render them as statements like: Bless are you poor... Blest are you who hunger... Blest are you who weep. The Greek is truer to the sense of what Jesus is saying; it proclaims the beatitudes as exclamation or ecstatic statements of the present reality. IT is **NOW**. **Now** happiness and the reign of God for the poor! **Now** satisfaction for the hungry! **Now** rejoicing and exultation for the persecuted!

Do you see what is happening, here and now. Jesus is inviting, calling, and challenging us to live the blessedness that is ours. Jesus is saying that tomorrow has become today. The reign of God that we have been waiting for is here, that which we seek, we have; that which we would be, we are! WE ARE BLESSED! That is not to say that 'this is all there is' or 'what you see is what you get.' No this says that we who live in the *expectation* of faith, live the *experience* of faith. The blessedness of the Good News is not a blessedness deferred; it is the blessedness of right here and right now.

I invite you to take a moment right here and right now; hear anew that you are blessed. You are blessed and you are blessing. Take a moment and consider your blessedness. Take a moment and call to mind someone or something for which you are grateful. In November, we created the wall of gratitude. Today, let create a wall of blessing. You are blessed; we are blessed – you are blessing; we are blessings ——— and we give thanks!

Our attitude of Blessing cards are in the pews (will be handed out); take a moment and fill one out. Return it in the offertory baskets as they go by.