



[If you haven't already, begin your meal with meal prayer, then take turns reading these boxes aloud, following the directions where applicable]

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

The first beatitude that Jesus teaches is:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
- Matthew 5:3

Does this mean that we have to be poor to go to heaven? Not exactly. It's helpful to look at how these words have been used in other parts of the Bible.

For example, in the Old Testament, this word used for "poor" are those who are without material possessions and whose confidence is in God. In some translations, the word is lowly or humble, instead of poor.

Luke's gospel states:

Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours
- Luke 6:20

What does this all mean?

Perhaps it could be summarized that whatever social rank, those who recognize their complete dependence on God will be the ones to be united with God.

It means knowing that your life doesn't belong to you, and surrendering it to God.

In other words, blessed are you if you are not attached to material things. When the kingdom of God is your ultimate goal then you can use material things for God's purposes to bless others and build his kingdom, without being addicted to them.

The Conversion of St. Paul

Jan. 25th is the feast of St. Paul's conversion. St Paul was a young man studying Jewish law when Jesus died and rose. Paul did not believe the stories about Jesus. In fact, he wanted to stop the Christians from telling what he thought were lies about God. But one day, as he was headed to persecute the Christians in Damascus,

Jesus appeared to Paul, knocking him off of his horse and saying "Why are you persecuting me?" Paul was then blind until he found the local Christians and asked for their help. When he accepted Jesus as Lord, he regained his sight. Paul's conversion is a great example of being poor for the sake of the kingdom.

Encountering Jesus on the road changed his life. He gave up a life of comfort and prestige for a life of poverty and persecution. Facing the truth may not have been easy, but he did it. From that time on, the zeal that he had poured into persecuting Christians became zeal for spreading the Gospel. Paul arguably became the greatest evangelist in the history of the world. May St Paul's willingness to surrender to God's plan be an inspiration to us all.

Discussion

[These questions are a spark for conversation, not a strict outline.]

- What can you recall about the beatitudes from last week? What is a "beatitude?"
- Jesus could have given the Beatitudes in any order, but he chose "Blessed are the poor in spirit," to be first. *Why do you think this Beatitude is so important for the rest of the Beatitudes?
- What did St Paul surrender to God? What do you need to surrender to God?

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the additional resource provided by the parish. If you don't have it, you can download it on our website]

Play one (or more) of the poor in spirit games on the handout. Then discuss the included questions. End by praying the beatitudes prayer together.

Beatitudes Prayer

Lord, make me poor spirit, so I can receive the kingdom of heaven.

Lord, when I mourn, help me find comfort.

Lord, make me meek, so that I may inherit the land.

Lord, help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness, so I may be satisfied.

Lord, make me merciful, so I may obtain your mercy.

Lord, make me pure of heart, so I may see you.

Lord, help me to make peace, so I may be called your child.

Lord, when I am persecuted for righteousness' sake, show me your kingdom.

Extras

- Article on the conversion of St Paul

<https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/january-25-the-conversion-of-saint-paul-apostle/>

- Listen to a 10 minute talk on spiritual poverty

<https://youtu.be/G3XjVh44>

- Crafts and activities for St. Paul's conversion

<https://www.brf.org.uk/product/saul-to-paul-craft-and-activity-ideas/>

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion:

The scripture we reflected on at our gathering (John 15: 1-11) says that if you remain on the vine you will bear fruit - What kind of fruit do you think will grow within you if you remain in Jesus??

This week's confirmation work is: The Sacraments of Initiation.

Read: Why we need Baptism
Why is Baptism needed for salvation?

Ask your parents about your Baptism. Have them tell you about the event. When?

Where? Who are your godparents and why were they chosen?

Links & information found at <https://staugustinedward.org/confirmation-preparation/>

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, Feb 1:

- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages

Coming Up:

- Confirmation AND First Reconciliation/Communion Students - your whole family should plan to attend on Feb 8 6-8 pm at St Augustine for a formation night.

