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NOTES FROM FATHER DANNY MURPHY'S MORNING OF REFLECTION, MARCH 15, 2017

QUOTES

Beauty doesn't matter because in the end, we all lose our looks and all we have is our heart.

All you need to be happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

Holiness is less a matter of what you do than it is of what you allow to happen.

A sure way to gauge your spiritual strength is to determine how often you become disturbed in a single day.

Serenity is the joyful cooperation with the inevitable.

Just as you can't have a conversation with someone who is drunk until they sober up, neither can you have a conversation with someone who is angry until they calm down.

How Can I forgive others? If you never condemned, you would never need to forgive.

Why is everyone here happy except me? Because they have learned to see goodness and beauty everywhere! Why don't I see goodness and beauty everywhere? Because you can't see outside of you what you fail to see inside.

To live God with one's whole heart means to say a whole-hearted YES to life and all that life brings with it: To accept without reservations, all that God has ordained for your life and to have the attitude Jesus had when He said, "not my will but yours be done". To love God with your whole heart is to make your own the words made famous by Dag Hammarskjöld: "For all that has been, Thanks. For all that will be, Yes".

FAVORITE PSALM AND SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Psalm 131; Romans 8:28

THE BEATITUDES

Do you ever notice the sharp contrast between what you hear out there and you hear in here? The contrast is never sharper than it is with the Beatitudes. Out there, we're bombarded by sleek and suave messages telling us how we can be happy. In here we hear the Beatitudes, Jesus' message for happiness – and it has nothing to do with what we hear out there.

It's as if Jesus looked around Him and saw that most people really weren't very happy and He knew why: They were living the wrong way because they didn't know the right way. So one day Jesus went up to the mountains, sat down and taught them the right way. He taught them the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes that Jesus taught are not at all like the Commandments Moses taught. The Commandments are obligatory; the Beatitudes are invitational. Jesus invites those who wish to be truly happy to live the Beatitudes. He invites; He doesn't force.

Did you notice that each of the Beatitudes begins with the word "blessed"? Scripture scholars tell us that the word "blessed" in Jesus' language means "oh the happiness of, oh the joy of, oh the bliss of". So the Beatitudes are the blueprint for happiness, joy, bliss. And did you notice that all of the Beatitudes are in the present tense? While we're awaiting eternal happiness in heaven, we can be extremely happy right now, by living the Beatitudes.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit

Jesus is not saying in this Beatitude that poverty is good. It's not good to be hungry, to be homeless, to be under or unemployed. It seems to me to be poor in spirit is to enjoy everything but to need nothing; to be grateful for all God's gifts but to cling to none of them. To be poor in spirit is to be rich in faith because to be poor in spirit is to know I already have and can never lose all I need to be happy: God and God's love.

2. Blessed are they who mourn

Some years ago I went to the wake of a young firefighter killed in the line of duty. His young wife, now his widow, told me that she and he were going out together since the 8th grade, since they were both 13, and that she was now pregnant with their 1st child. Then she broke down and sobbed and sobbed. Her tears were born out of love so they were holy tears, sacred. She was so blessed that she had someone she loved so much that she now mourns so much. It seems to me that in this Beatitude Jesus is telling us that only those who love deeply truly mourn.

3. Blessed are the meek

In this Beatitude, Jesus is not asking us to be a doormat, to be degraded, disrespected. To be meek, I think, is to be humble, to allow that it's not always all about me, to allow others to talk, to allow others to shine.

4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness

My all-time favorite restaurant is Peter Luger's in Brooklyn. When I was a seminarian, I spent several summers helping out in the parish in which Peter Luger's is located. One day my uncle was visiting me in the parish and he says to me and the priest of the parish, "Come on, let's go to Luger's for dinner, my treat". The priest replied, "Thank you so much. I can't go but you two go and enjoy yourselves". Then I pulled the priest aside and told him, "I know Luger's is expensive but my uncle can afford it. Come on, let's go". But he explained, Danny, none of the people in my parish can afford to go to Peter Luger's. Some of them are porters and dishwashers there. It just wouldn't be right for me to go".

5. Blessed are the merciful

There are many facets of Christianity that are optional; there are a few that are mandatory. Forgiveness is a decision not a feeling. With the help of the grace of God, I can decide to forgive even if I don't feel any affection for the person who wronged me.

6. Blessed are the clean of heart

This Beatitude relates to pure motives rather than sexual purity. The clean of heart are people whose inner and outer selves correspond. They're free of duplicity. They're people of integrity. You can trust people who are clean of heart. They won't reveal a secret. They won't talk behind your back. They won't say one thing but mean another.

7. Blessed are the peacemakers

Do you notice that Jesus didn't say, "Blessed are the peace-prayers"? He doesn't say "Blessed are the peace-lovers". He said "Blessed are the peace-makers". In this Beatitude Jesus invites us to make peace. One way that all of us can be peacemakers is to follow this simple advice from St. Paul: "Only say good things people need to hear, things that will really help them".

8. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness

The scriptures say that Moses was the mildest man on the face of the earth. Yet, when he came down from Mount Tabor and saw the Israelites worshipping a golden calf, he became so angry that he smashed the tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments. Jesus made a whip of cords to drive the money changers from the temple and in His anger, He turned over their tables. In this Beatitude Jesus invites us to stand up and speak out for what is right and to be angry and upset with what is wrong – and to have the courage to pay the price when we do.

- So -

Blessed are the poor in spirit

Blessed are they who mourn

Blessed are the weak

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the clean of heart

Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness

Oh the happiness of, Oh the joy of, Oh the bliss of living the Beatitudes.