

Blessed are the Meek (Mt. 5:5)

Start with silence and reciting: *Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, Come and dwell within us, Cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Gracious One. Amen.*

Then read these pages, reflect on each part, and do the Individual Reflection at the end.

Hopefully this will enrich your understanding of this Beatitude and strengthen your faith.

Conclude with this prayer from the Psalms as in the Typical Psalms of our Green Pew Book:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my being bless his holy name. Blessed are you, O Lord.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the lord all my life.

I will make music to my God while I live. Amen.

I

Word of God

Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the land.

Shedding Light

The Meek. The third beatitude quotes Ps 37, where the **meek** are the lowly who patiently wait on the Lord amid their afflictions and **refrain from responding in anger or with force against those who wrong them**. They rely on God—not their own strength—to set things right.

God will vindicate the meek and give them the honorable position they did not aggressively seek for themselves. Biblical examples of meekness include Moses, when criticized by his sister and brother (Num 12:1–15); David, when King Saul was trying to kill him (1 Sam 24:1–20); and above all Jesus, at his arrest and throughout his passion (26:49–27:50). Jesus' instructions regarding anger and retaliation illustrate what it means to be meek (5:21–26, 38–41).[1] The first Christian communities indeed *understood Christ* as being **the meek** (2 Cor 10:1) and **example to follow**.

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his

[1] C. Mitch & E. Sri, *Matthew, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*, p.90

steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:21b-23)

The land. Abraham is the first example of a meek person who will inherit the land (Gen 15:7; conf. 28:4). The Lord promised him a land, a home, if he would trust in him and go where the Lord commanded him to go. The same promise is repeated during the *exodus* (Exodus 23:30): the Lord will lead them and cast out their enemies from the land he promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Isaiah 61 comes to mind, the passage that contributes to themes in the first two beatitudes: *Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, **they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs*** (Is. 61:7). The everlasting joy points to the messianic times of restoration.

In Qumran, Ps 37 was interpreted in eschatological terms, referring to the final days of the salvation (4Q171 frags. 1–10). In the same manner, Jesus does not refer to *the land* as a geographical entity, but rather to the *new land* as a reference to the Kingdom.

Pope Francis (General Audience – Catechesis on the Beatitudes, February 19, 2020):

Here, the term “meek”, literally means sweet, docile, gentle, devoid of violence. Meekness manifests itself in times of conflict. It can be seen by how one reacts to a hostile situation. Anyone can appear meek when everything is peaceful, but how does one react “under pressure”, if one is under attack, offended, threatened?

But let us look more closely at the verb that is used to indicate the possessions of the meek: they do not conquer the earth. It does not say “Blessed the meek for they shall conquer the earth”. They “inherit it”. Blessed are the meek, for they shall “inherit” the earth. In the Scriptures the verb “inherit” has a much deeper meaning. The People of God actually refer to the land of Israel which is the Land of the Promise, as their “inheritance”.

That land is a promise and a gift to the People of God and it becomes the symbol for something much greater than a simple territory. There is a "land" — allow me to play on words — which is Heaven, that is the land towards which we are journeying: the new heavens and the new earth towards which we are going (cf. Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:13; Ap 21:1).

Therefore, the meek are those who "inherit" the most sublime of territories. They are not cowards, "weak" people who find a moral expedient to avoid difficulties. Quite the contrary! They are people who have received an inheritance and do not wish to squander it. The meek are not accommodating, but rather they are Christ's disciples who have learned how to protect quite another earth. They protect their peace. They protect their relationship with God and they protect his gifts, God's gifts, preserving mercy, fraternity, trust, hope, because meek people are merciful, fraternal, trusting people with hope.

Here we have to mention the sin of "anger", a violent surge whose impulse we all understand. Who has not been angry at some point? Everyone [has]. We have to reconsider this Beatitude and ask ourselves a question: how many things have we destroyed in anger? How many things have we lost? A moment of anger can destroy many things. One loses control and does not value what is truly important. And one can ruin a relationship with a brother or sister, sometimes beyond any remedy. Many brothers or sisters no longer speak to each other because of anger. They distance themselves from each other. It is the opposite of meekness. Meekness brings people together. Anger separates.

Meekness can conquer many things. Meekness is capable of winning over hearts, saving friendships and many other things besides. People become angry, but then they calm down, they think it over and retrace their steps. In this way, one can rebuild with meekness.

"The "earth" to be conquered with meekness is the salvation of that brother whom the Gospel of Matthew mentions: "If he listens to you, you have gained your brother" (Mt 18:15). There is no earth more beautiful than the heart of others. There is no finer territory to attain than that of the peace found again with a brother or sister. And this is the earth to be inherited through meekness!

Individual Reflection

- What is my reaction when I face wrongdoings?
- Is there anger or even revenge in my heart?
- Do I fight back? Do I wait for the 'right moment' to pay back?
- Am I emotional in such situations or able to bring up concrete, objective arguments in my defense?

- How do we handle tensions in our community?
- Do we speak out with respect? Do we go by in silence?
- Is there a constructive discussion based on sources or on emotions and personal desires?
- Where is the goal of my life/our life?
- Is the present life **the goal** or do I count on the life after death? How do I see/understand it?
- Are we 'heaven orientated' or 'here and now'? Where do you see this orientation in the life of your parish?
- Do we live united or divided? What is our attitude toward the outsiders/larger community? Toward those who do not belong to us?