

All Saints SML 2020
MT 5:1-12

When Our Blessed Lord was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing various sicknesses through the whole of Galilee, the fame of His mighty works had spread into all Syria, and large crowds from all parts of Judea were flocking to the heavenly Physician. As human ignorance is slow to believe what it does not see, and slow to hope for what it does not know, those who were to be instructed in the ways of holiness needed to be aroused by bodily benefits and visible miracles so that they might have no doubt as to the authenticity of Jesus' teaching. Consequently, Our Blessed Lord used outward healings to introduce inward remedies, so that, after healing bodies, He might cure souls.

With curing souls in mind, the Lord separated Himself from the surrounding crowd, ascended a Galilean mountain, and called not only His apostles to Him, but disciples as well, anyone who would hear His word and believe in Him. And from that mystic height on the Mountain of the Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee, He instructed them in loftier doctrines, signifying from the very nature of a mountain, that it was He who had once spoken to Moses. Back when on Mt.

Sinai there were terrifying thunder and lightning. But now on the Mountain of the Beatitudes, Jesus spoke with a holy tranquility.

The Lord, who had spoken to Moses, was now speaking to His disciples, and as Jesus spoke, He revealed the secrets of the new covenant in their hearts. There were no thick clouds surrounding Him as of old, nor were the people frightened by thunder and lightning, but quietly and freely His sermon reached the ears of those who stood near, that the harsh law might give way to gentle grace.

The nature of Christ's teaching was attested to by what He said that those who wished to arrive at eternal blessedness may understand the steps to get there. Jesus' first words were not, "Thou shall not!", but "Blessed." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It would perhaps be questionable what poor He was speaking of, if in saying "blessed are the poor" He had added nothing which would explain what sort of poor, as if poverty by itself would win the kingdom of heaven. Yet Jesus knew what you and I know. Poverty does not necessarily win hearts for the Lord. But when He says "blessed are the poor in spirit," He shows that the kingdom of heaven must be for those who are recommended

by the humility of their spirits rather than by the smallness of their means.

No doubt this possession of humility might more easily be acquired by the poor than the rich: for submissiveness is the companion of the poor, while loftiness is the companion of the rich.

Yet in many of the rich is found the poor in spirit, as well, who use their abundance not to increase their profit or their pride, but on works of charity, and consider their greatest gain to relieve the hardship of others.

Blessed, therefore, is poverty which is not possessed with the treasures in this life, but rich in the treasures in the next life.

Of this humility in spirit both Our Blessed Lord and the Apostles have given us example, who, turned from catching fish to fishing for men, and many imitated their faith. The members of the early Church:

- ✓ put away their things and possessions,
- ✓ enriched themselves with eternal goods,
- ✓ through the most devoted poverty,
- ✓ and in accord with apostolic preaching,

rejoiced to have nothing of the world and possessed all things with Christ.

Hence the blessed Apostle Peter, when he was going up into the temple, and was asked for alms by the lame man, said, “I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk.” (Acts 3:6) What is more beautiful than this humility? What is richer than this poverty?

Yesterday, at St. Joseph Cathedral in Hartford, CT, Father Michael McGivney was beatified and given the title “Blessed,” the same word that prefaces every beatitude. Blessed Michael McGivney. Blessed Michael is one step closer to becoming a canonized saint of the Church. Here is what I read regarding Father McGivney and his humility, written by one of his contemporaries:

I remember meeting with Father McGivney in New Haven in 1883, the year after the first incorporation of the Knights. He was then in the prime of his vigor, entrusted by a good but delicate pastor, Father Lawlor, with the management of St. Mary’s, a parish lying close under the towers of Yale College and at that time the most aristocratic parish in Connecticut. Father McGivney himself was anything but

aristocratic; he was a man of extreme grace of manner in any society, but without any airs, without any “lugs,” if you will pardon the expression. I saw him but once and yet I remember his pale, beautiful face as if I saw it only yesterday; it was “a priest’s face,” and that explains everything. It was a face of wonderful repose; there was nothing harsh in that countenance, although there was

- ✓ everything that was strong;
- ✓ there was nothing sordid,
- ✓ nothing mercenary,
- ✓ nothing of the politician,
- ✓ nothing of the axe-grinder.

Guile and ambition were as far from him as from heaven. To meet him was at once to trust him; children actually loved him; and the very old people of the neighborhood, whom he hunted up and who got part of his time even on busiest days, called him a positive saint and meant it.

We are all aware of the scrutiny of the Knights of Columbus in Senator Kamala Harris’s questioning of Brian Buescher during his confirmation hearing to be a federal judge. Senator Harris, along with Hawaii Senator Mazie

Hirono, questioned Mr. Buescher's ability to serve impartially based on his membership in the Knights.

"Were you aware that the Knights of Columbus opposed a woman's right to choose when you joined the organization?" Senator Harris asked Mr. Buescher.

The answer was obvious as the Knights of Columbus have been very vocal and proud to defend unborn children since its inception, consistent with Catholic teaching. Throughout the country, the Knights are also known for their charitable works, donating cash to needy children, supporting crisis pregnancy centers and raising money for children with disabilities. I wonder if Senators Harris and Korono are aware the founder of the Knights of Columbus, is slated for sainthood, or, if they even care, for that matter.

Blessed Michael McGivney, like St. Peter, did not have stores of money, but they did have the gift of faith. The beggar born lame was made whole by Peter with a word of faith; and Peter, who in his poverty had not money to give the beggar, bestowed such a rich bounty of divine grace, that in restoring health to the feet of one man, he healed the hearts of many thousands of believers who witnessed the miracle. He had

found them all lame in Jewish unbelief, but he made them leap for joy in Christ Jesus.