

I really love a good story, and it can be almost any kind. Action, adventure, mystery, fantasy, it doesn't matter the type, and there are many things that can make a story great. The plot, an intense description of the setting, the style of writing itself. There is so much that can make a story great, but for me, the most important thing character development. A good author writes characters that a person can relate to, they connect with, that make you want to invest in them. It is the internal disposition of these characters that shows us so much about who they are. And a good story allows that character to develop over time, learn from mistakes, change and grow. You end up hoping for triumph for the main character or conversion or justice of the antagonist.

Today 's gospel passage is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, and in it Jesus reveals to all humanity the beatitudes, the blueprint for the internal character and disposition that all Christians are called to possess. In proclaiming the beatitudes to the people gathered that day, Jesus was not simply revealing a set of rules to be followed, but HIS disposition, his heart. The internal character that every single Catholic is called to embrace and live out in their own life. The beatitudes show us the disposition our hearts need to obtain the great happiness that God has prepared for us in heaven.

These 8 beatitudes that were spoken on the mountain by Christ and written in the deepest desires of our hearts by God reveal to us the character of a saint, and that is what we were made to be! To be men and women of virtue, who conform our lives to Christ so that one day WE may be counted among those who have obtained that eternal beatitude of seeing God face to face in heaven. If this seems like a big undertaking, that is because it is. In a world that constantly seeks worldly happiness, the beatitudes call us to give of ourselves and seek true happiness which comes from a relationship with God. The Solemnity of All Saints that we celebrate today brings to the forefront those men and women, young and old whose character, whose love, whose story has led them to the ultimate goal of heaven.

In 1993, Joseph Ratzinger, who would become Pope Benedict XVI, was asked in an interview "**How many ways are there to God?**" he simply replied "**As many as there are people. For even within the same faith each man's way is an entirely personal one**". This is so abundantly clear when we look at the stories of the lives of the saints. We see all types of saints. We see St. John, who mourned with the Blessed Mother at the foot of the Cross and the teenager, St. Joan of Arc who took up arms to protect her beloved France and preserve the faith there. We read the stories of St. Isaac Jogues, St. Francis Xavier, and

countless other missionaries who traveled the world to spread the Gospel. We look to St. Monica who mourned for the sins of her son and constantly prayed for his conversion, and from those prayers we can read of the great conversion of her son St. Augustine. There are saints of our own day, Mother Teresa who dedicated her life to caring for those in the slums of Calcutta. And Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who St. John Paul II called the “man of the beatitudes” because of his great devotion to serving all of those around him and the joy which helped him bring people to Christ.

Yes, there are truly as many ways as there are people, and as many different stories as there are saints.

Yet, with each story being completely personal, there is a common thread that runs through all of them. All the saints were formed by the beatitudes, they lived them in their lives every single day and at times it was not easy, but they persevered because that is what saints do. **SAINTS KEEP TRYING.** They lived the beatitudes and developed that interior character that is rooted in the heart of Christ. It was fed at the altar in reception of Holy Communion and worship during the Mass. The saints constantly allowed the word of God to wash over them and be the driving influence in the story of their lives.

Yes, my brothers and sisters there are many ways to be a saint within our own faith and this is what God wants for each of us. But we are not simply called to replicate the exact acts that other saints have done in the past. We are called to learn from them, to be inspired by them, and to become saints **TODAY, HERE, NOW, IN 2020. To be saints at home, at work, and at school, in a world desperately needs them.** There are so many stories of the saints, some known to the world and others only known to God, and we are called to join them by living the beatitudes.

All these great stories of the saints lived heroic lives for Christ in their own way and we have the stories of their lives to prove it. So, the question we need to ask ourselves is simple...

WHAT WILL MY STORY BE?