

## Franciscan Spirituality Meeting

♪ Christians, let us love one another, As we share the true living bread.

Jesus is our God and our brother; With his flesh and blood we are fed.

**EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD. JESUS IS OUR LIFE. GOD IS LOVE.**

We who break this bread are one body, We who share this cup are all one.

Children of our Father in heaven, We are heirs with God's only son.

**EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD. JESUS IS OUR LIFE. GOD IS LOVE.**

Jesus is the vine, we the branches; we are grains of wheat, Christ the bread.

Those who eat this bread live forever, one with Christ, our Lord and our head.

**EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD. JESUS IS OUR LIFE. GOD IS LOVE.**

[melody: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence"]

[Recap of August & September meetings]

### August 2<sup>nd</sup>

The filter, the lens through which we hear any truth is critical.

In our culture, we most often hear the truth through the lens or filter of individualism.

What good is it for me? That's "*My Story*"

In some other situations & in some other cultures, the truth may be seen/heard through the filter/lens

What good is it for the tribe, the party, the institution? That's "*Our Story*"

If we are disciples of Christ, we need to put on the glasses, or the hearing aids of the Gospel.

We need to pray for the mind of Jesus so we can look at & listen to "*The Story*" or the Gospel Story.

### September 13

Only the whole self is ever ready for the whole God, so *Reorder* [the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the constant life pattern

of Order, Disorder, Reorder A.K.A. Romance, Disillusion, Joy (Marriage Encounter) OR Life, Death, Resurrection]

The process always involves moving beyond the dualistic mind toward a more spacious,  
contemplative knowing.

In fact, **if we are going to rebuild society, we **first** need to be rebuilt ourselves.**

A healthy psyche lives within at least 3 levels of meaning.

We might imagine three domes, or containers.

The **1<sup>st</sup>** & smallest dome is called *My Story*,

the **2<sup>nd</sup>** & larger dome is called *Our Story*, and

the **3<sup>rd</sup>** & largest dome is called *The Story*.

This can be true of families, communities & institutions as well.

Two lenses of a pair of Gospel glasses, or spiritual hearing aids, are the **Beatitudes** and the **Lord's Prayer**. They are how we can see **my** story and **our** story in the mirror of **The Story**.

This is a meditation that came to **Peter** at a daily Mass at Our Lady of the Valley, after Communion. Two of the prayers closest to his heart met one another and began to have a conversation. **THE BEATITUDES** spoke, then the **LORD'S PRAYER** answered.

As Jesus proclaimed God's profound truth, he could hear his heart's voice answer.

The dialogue went something like this:

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs!"*

**Me:** Ah, are you saying that I need to depend so totally on God that I can say: **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name"**?

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are they who mourn, they shall be comforted!"*

**Me:** Yes, Lord, I do grieve the incompleteness of your kingdom here, I mourn the fact that your attitudes and values have not yet fully penetrated society, the church or my own heart. So I pray daily, **"Your Kingdom come... on earth as in heaven."**

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth!"*

**Me:** It's taken me awhile to understand you, Lord. Are you talking about being totally responsive to your Spirit? That's what I pray for when I say, **"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."**

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are they who hunger & thirst for holiness, they shall be filled!"*

**Me:** Yes, Lord, I am very hungry for you, for your light and for your peace in the world and the unity of all Christians, so I pray: **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are the merciful, they shall receive mercy!"*

**Me:** That's one I understand immediately, even though it's not easy to live. The deepest part of my ministry continues to be the ministry of reconciliation and forgiveness. from the depths of my being I pray: **"Forgive us our offenses as we forgive our offenders."**

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are the pure of heart, they shall see God!"*

**Me:** I long for that gift, that simplicity of heart, the ability to will one thing, but I get so easily distracted by my own pain and need for control so I need to pray **"Leave us not in temptation"** or **"Do not abandon us to temptation"**.

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called the children of God!"*

**Me:** Lord, your blessing makes it painfully clear that real peacemakers are liable to become martyrs & that so many nations & even religious groups are addicted to conflict & war. What pours spontaneously from my heart is the prayer **"Deliver us from evil"** or even **"Deliver us from the evil one"**

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**Jesus:** *"Blessed are they who are persecuted for holiness' sake, the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs!"*

**Me:** It's strange, Lord, but this final word gives me hope that nothing can permanently frustrate your plan, so I break into praise: **"For the Kingdom, the Power & the glory are yours, now & forever. Amen."**

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THIS PRAYER CAN ALSO BE PRAYED BY BEGINNING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER & CONNECTING EACH PHRASE WITH A BEATITUDE.  
AND EACH BEATITUDE CAN BE IMAGED BY ONE OF GOD'S CREATURES.

THAT'S HOW I PRAY OFTEN WHILE WALKING, EITHER OUTSIDE OR IN MY APARTMENT.

This prayer & these verses of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew  
are the summary of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels.  
They are also a description of the way Jesus prayed & the way he lived,  
so they are the ideal of the way we are invited & empowered to pray & to live.

The Rule of the Secular Franciscans presently begins with these words: --

"The rule & life of the secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following  
the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration & the center of his life with God & people."

This echoes both the Rule of the Friars Minor & the Rule of the Poor Clares.

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### ***OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME***

**BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS.....**



FRAN THE FINCH

When I look at my world through the words, "Our Father who art in heaven," I see all people, of all races and tribes and nations as brothers & sisters. I even see all creation as part of my family – and hear a clear call to care for the earth & its creatures. That leads to knowing that everything is a gift, and I cannot claim ownership. I am **poor in spirit**, in the sense that I depend on God for every breath, every thought, everything, like the birds of the air. Jesus was poor in spirit. This beatitude is like the 1<sup>st</sup> step of AA – We were powerless .....

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### ***YOUR KINGDOM COME,***

**BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN, THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED**



CHRIS THE BABY HARP SEAL

When I pray, **Your kingdom come**, I sometimes say it, "Your KIN-dom come, may humanity become more and more one family- along with all of creation. The Kingdom of God, as Jesus describes it, is a set of relationships with God, each other and all creation. And I **mourn** that we are so far from that reality, that we prefer our own "kingdoms". I mourn that baby seals are killed so the rich can have fur coats while the species approaches extinction.

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### ***YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN***

**BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.**



HARRY THE HORSE

When I pray, **your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**, I pray that I can be as responsive to the will of God as a good horse is to its rider. That is the biblical meaning of the Greek word for **meek**. Jesus said, "Come to me ... I am meek and humble of heart"....Mt. 11:28, 29

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***GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD***

**BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR HOLINESS      THEY SHALL BE FILLED**



BOBBIE THE BEAR

When I pray “**Give us this day our daily bread**” I am praying for what I need and that the needs of my sisters and brothers be satisfied as well. Not too little, but not too much. I am praying for my deepest needs to be fulfilled, not my “wants”, knowing that in my deepest self, my true self, my Christ self I am **hungering and thirsting for holiness** – a fusing of both righteousness and justice. I need to be hungry as a bear for holiness.

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***FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.  
OR    FORGIVE US OUR OFFENSES AS WE FORGIVE OUR OFFENDERS.***

**BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY**



DANNY THE DOG

This connection is the clearest, & the one I began with when I first meditated on these two passages. The call to **forgive**, to love my enemy is the clearest & most difficult part of the Gospel. It is the core of the message that G.K Chesterton said has not been tried & found wanting but has been found difficult & left untried. You have to be in contact with **The Story** to even attempt to live it & you have to be united with the Christ within in order to grow into living it. The closest I come to living it with some people & in some situations is that I can let Jesus forgive, even when I can't. I need the heart of a faithful dog who will always accept its human companion. Once again, I am powerless.

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***AND LEAVE US NOT IN TEMPTATION***

**BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART, THEY SHALL SEE GOD**



EDDIE THE EAGLE

When I come to this part of the Our Father, I don't pray the customary words, “**And lead us not into temptation**” because that translation of the ancient languages of Greek & Aramaic is misleading. The core meaning is a combination of “*Don't let us fall into temptation,*” as it is prayed in Spanish in South America, and “*Don't let us give in to temptation.*” [in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the meaning is explained as a combination of “Do not allow us to enter into temptation” and Do not let us yield to temptation”] That's why Anna & I always pray, “*Leave us not in temptation*” even while everyone else is saying “lead us not....” In order to accept the gift of grace to avoid or get through the tests of each day, I need to live the beatitude, “**Blessed are the pure of heart**” so I can see God's way, and even see the way God sees. I need the vision of an eagle.

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***BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL***

**BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, THEY SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD....**



WILLIE THE WOLF

(TAMED BY ST. FRANCIS)

When I pray, “**Deliver us from evil**” I realize that another way to pray it is “*Deliver us from the Evil One.*” I realize that I cannot overcome evil with more evil, violence with more violence. Jesus corrected that tendency in his Sermon on the Mount. The only way to cooperate with God & fully accept the freedom of the Children of God is to become a **peacemaker**, like St. Francis, who called the wolf his brother & overcame its destructive violence with love. Once again, **OUR** Father means we are all one family. Jesus & Francis, by their lives & teaching, unmasked the illusion of “redemptive violence,” the illusion that violence is the way to overcome violence.

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***FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY ARE YOURS NOW AND FOREVER***

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR HOLINESS’ SAKE,  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS**



SAM THE SKUNK

This phrase is usually omitted when Catholics pray the Lord’s Prayer, but is always included in some form when other Christians pray it. You will also hear it at AA meetings & at other 12 step groups. It was part of the prayer in an ancient document, the Didache, c100 AD, which is evidence that the early Christians prayed it as part of the Our Father. The reform of the Mass after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council includes it in the Eucharist, with a brief prayer between the familiar ending and “*For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.*” When I pray it, I recall that I do not have the power to live like Jesus unless the Holy Spirit, God within me, gives it to me. [We are **IN** the world, but not **OF** the world, as Jesus prayed.] And, when I admit my powerlessness, my poverty of spirit, I can even endure the stinky experience of being **persecuted**, ignored, dismissed, oppressed or even killed. [This oppression can take the form of sickness, as during this pandemic]

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**Reflection Questions**

~When I look through the glasses of the Gospel, the filter of the **Lord’s Prayer** & **Beatitudes**,  
Which phrase of the Our Father or the Beatitudes disturbs me the most? ~ Attracts me the most?

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~Does it change or challenge what I see or hear In myself?

In my family & network of friends?

In the world of business, education & Politics?

In the situation of a world wide pandemic?

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~How am I called to acknowledge and **magnify** the **good**?

~To acknowledge and **change** the **bad**?