



A Catholic Women's League led mission on behalf of Divine Infant Parish, Orleans, ON

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE

**"Blessed are the
merciful, for they
will be shown
mercy"**

(Matthew 5:7)



**Presented by the Divine Mercy Cenacle
Ministry**



The Beatitudes reveal the divine path and purpose for a life lived in the name of Jesus. They are statements of grace, not law, revealed to us by Christ Himself. Through them He reveals the spiritual attributes that, by God's Grace, will ultimately guide us to His Kingdom.



The Beatitudes lead us from a life of material comfort and aspiration towards one of selflessness lead by the Spirit.

(Pope Francis, General Audience, Library of the Apostolic Palace, 29 April 2020)

Presented in hierarchical fashion, the Beatitudes infer that each one builds systematically upon the foundation of the first: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3) and

ends on the eighth "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness; sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:11). (To see the progression of all eight Beatitude, please see the diagram on page 11).

This booklet will take you through a journey of learning about and living the fifth Beatitude, "*Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy*", over the course of two months. In total there will be 7 weeks of challenges for you to complete. The challenges of Part I will focus on learning about this Beatitude. The challenges of Part II will focus on activities which help you to live this Beatitude; to do things for yourself, for your family and for your community.



PART I. LEARNING ABOUT THE BEATITUDE

WEEK 1 CHALLENGE – POPE FRANCIS' REFLECTION

Let us first begin learning about the Fifth Beatitude by reading Pope Francis' reflection. As we read, let us consider what it means to be merciful. How does being merciful help us in our relationship with Christ, and ultimately allow us to receive His mercy? Even though mercy is first for the forgiveness of our sins, it does not stop there. Once forgiveness is offered to us and received into our hearts, God invites us to share in the freedom and glory of His abundant life.



POPE FRANCIS
GENERAL AUDIENCE

Library of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning,

Today we will consider the fifth Beatitude which says: **"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy"** (Mt 5:7). There is a peculiar aspect to this beatitude. It is the only one in which the cause and the fruit of happiness coincide: mercy. Those who show mercy will find mercy, they will be "shown mercy".

This theme of reciprocity of forgiveness is not found only in this Beatitude, but is recurrent throughout the Gospel. How could it be otherwise? Mercy is the very heart of God! Jesus says: "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven" (Lk 6:37). It is always the same reciprocity. And the Letter of James states that "mercy triumphs over judgment" (Jam 2:13).

But it is above all in the "Lord's Prayer" that we pray: "forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Mt 6:12); and this question is taken up again at the end: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt 6:14-15; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2838).

There are two things that cannot be separated: forgiveness granted and forgiveness received. However, many people struggle; they cannot forgive. Often the harm received is so great that being able to forgive feels like climbing a very high mountain: an enormous effort; and one thinks: it cannot be done, this cannot be done. This fact of the reciprocity of mercy shows that we have to overturn the perspective. We cannot do this alone. We need God's grace, we must ask for it. Indeed if the fifth Beatitude promises mercy, and in the "Lord's Prayer" we ask for the forgiveness of debts, it means that we are essentially debtors and we need to find mercy!

We are all debtors. All of us. To God who is so generous and to our brothers and sisters. Everyone knows that he/she is not the father or mother that he or she should be, the bride or groom, the brother or sister. We are all "in deficit" in life. And we need mercy. We know that we too have done wrong. There is always something lacking in the good that we should have done.

However, our very poverty becomes our strength to forgive! We are debtors and if, as we heard at the start, we shall be measured with the same measure with which we measure others (cf. Lk 6:38), then it would suit us to widen our measure and to

forgive debts; to forgive. Each person should remember that they need to forgive, they are in need of forgiveness and they need patience. This is the secret to mercy: *by forgiving one is forgiven*. Thus God precedes us and he forgives us first (cf. Rom 5:8). In receiving his forgiveness, we too are capable of forgiving. One's own misery and lack of justice therefore, become opportunities to open oneself up to the Kingdom of Heaven, to a greater measure, the measure of God who is mercy.

Where does our mercy come from? Jesus told us: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). The more one welcomes the Father's love, the more we can love (cf. CCC 2842). Mercy is not a dimension among others but rather the centre of Christian life. There is no Christianity without mercy [Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (30 November 1980); *Misericordiae Vultus* Bull (11 April 2015); Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera* (20 November 2016)]. If all our Christianity does not lead us to mercy, then we have taken the wrong path because mercy is the only true destination of all spiritual journeys. It is one of the most beautiful fruits of mercy (cf. CCC 1829).

I remember that this theme was chosen for the first Angelus that I had to recite as Pope: mercy. And this has remained very much impressed on me, as a message that I would always have to offer as Pope, a message for everyday: mercy. I remember that on that day I even had an attitude that was somewhat "brazen", as if I were advertising a book about mercy that had just been published by Cardinal Kasper. And on that day I felt very strongly that this is the message that I must offer as Bishop of Rome: mercy, mercy, please, forgiveness.

God's mercy is our liberation and our happiness. We live of mercy and we cannot afford to be without mercy. It is the air that we breathe. We are too poor to set any conditions. We need to forgive because we need to be forgiven. Thank you!

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Action:

Reflect in prayer on God's invitation to Mercy, the need to forgive and to follow Him totally.



WEEK 2 CHALLENGE - SAINT FAUSTINA

O my Jesus, each of Your saints reflects one of Your virtues; I desire to reflect Your compassionate heart, full of mercy. (*Diary*, 1242):



Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska was born on August 25, 1905, in Glogowiec, Poland of a poor and religious family of peasants, the third of 10 children. She was baptized with the name Helena. From a very tender age she stood out because of her love of prayer, work, obedience, and her sensitivity to the poor. At the age of seven she had already felt the first stirrings of a religious vocation. She attended school for only three semesters. After finishing school, she wanted to enter the convent, but her parents would not give her permission. Being of age at 16, Helena left home and went to work as a housekeeper to find the means of supporting herself and of helping her parents.

Helena never lost her desire for a religious vocation. After being called during a vision of the Suffering Christ, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on August 1, 1925, and took the name Sr. Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament. She lived in the Congregation for thirteen years in several religious houses where she worked as a cook, gardener, and porter.

Externally nothing revealed her rich mystical interior life. She zealously performed her tasks and faithfully observed the rule of religious life. Although her life was apparently insignificant, monotonous and dull, she hid within herself an extraordinary union with God.

The Lord Jesus chose Sr. Maria Faustina as the Apostle and "Secretary" of His Mercy, so that she could tell the world about His great message, which Sr. Faustina recorded in a diary she titled *Divine Mercy in My Soul*.

Sister Maria Faustina, consumed by tuberculosis and by innumerable sufferings which she accepted as a voluntary sacrifice for sinners, died in Krakow at the age of just 33 on October 5, 1938, with a reputation for spiritual maturity and a mystical union with God. Saint John Paul II canonized Sr. Faustina in 2000 making her the "first saint of the new millennium." Speaking of Sr. Faustina and the importance of the message contained in her *Diary*, the Pope called her "the great apostle of Divine Mercy in our time." From *Apostle of Divine Mercy*, a biography published by the Vatican:

Picture/Images of St. Faustina Kowalska.

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Action: This week, let us ask St. Faustina, the Apostle of Mercy, to intercede on our behalf before Our Lord, that we might be granted the grace to shower His Mercy on everyone and in every circumstance.

WEEK 3 CHALLENGE – SCRIPTURE READING

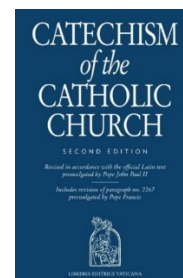
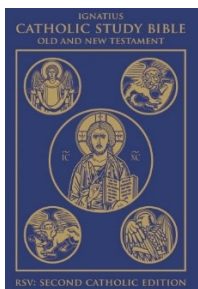
Jesus to St. Faustina: “I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbor: the first – by deed, the second – by word, the third – by prayer. In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy, and is an unquestionable proof of love for Me” (*Diary* # 742)

Love for Enemies. (Luke 6:27-38)

“But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your cloak do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”



Action: This week let us ask for God’s grace as we pray for those people we struggle with the most: acting with compassion, speaking with kindness, and interceding for them, mirroring God’s own boundless love and mercy.

PART II ~ LIVING THE BEATITUDE

WEEK 4 CHALLENGE – LIVING THE BEATITUDE AS AN INDIVIDUAL

A reflection: Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Redeemer, freely embraced the Cross out of love for us, enduring unspeakable cruelty, hatred mockery and humiliation. Yet from the Cross, with His Sacred Heart overflowing with Love and Mercy, He cried out, “Father, forgive them”. To us, His followers, who have been blessed to know this Mercy in our own lives, He doesn’t just suggest that we show mercy to all others and in all circumstances, He demands it!

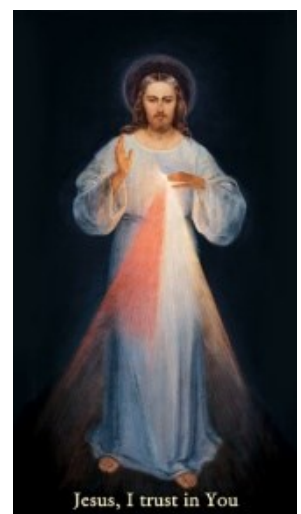
Action: This week consider doing some of the following:

1. Knowing that we are unable with our own strength to meet such an uncompromising demand, Our Lord provides, through His Church, sources of grace to enable us to conquer “our demands for justice”. Some of these sources are: The Sacraments, in particular Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist; Holy Mass; Adoration; The Scriptures – God’s Living Word; Mary, Our Blessed Mother; the lives of the Saints.

This week, let us resolve to delve more deeply into, or **participate more frequently in, one or more of these sources of grace** so that, once strengthened, we can become sources of His Love and Mercy for others.

2. Let us recall a past confession in which we were forgiven something we were truly ashamed to have done. Did we not rejoice to hear Christ’s words of absolution and forgiveness, spoken by the priest, which acted as a healing balm over the wound of our sin? This week, **let us extend to someone in our life the same healing balm of forgiveness**. And let us also **offer a prayer of thanksgiving** to God for the mercies we have received from Him, through the ministry of His priests, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
3. Let us take some time to **read and meditate on Scripture**, God’s Living Word.
4. This week, let us look for **opportunities to bless others**.

Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.



WEEK 5 CHALLENGE – LIVING THE BEATITUDE AS A FAMILY

What is mercy? Father Mike Schmitz defines it in this way: “*Mercy is love when we need it the most and deserve it the least – it’s a gift poured out when we’re at our lowest.*”

Action: This week let us look for opportunities to:

1. **Extend His mercy and love** to our family members especially when they’re at their lowest.
 - Offer words of forgiveness and compassion, rather than words of criticism or anger, to a family member who has offended us in some way.
 - Forgive an offence quickly and don’t hold a grudge.
 - Use words to bless, uplift, encourage and celebrate family members.
 - Pray together daily as a family, and for any specific needs of individual family members.
2. **Practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in the family (CCC 2447).** You are invited to consider the following suggestions, offered specifically with children in mind.
 - **Give food to the hungry** – Help set the table or assist Mom or Dad in preparing a nutritious meal for the family.
 - **Shelter the homeless** – Share something of your own with a sibling, whether a space or perhaps just some of your time, where they are joyfully welcomed to be with you; Invite a friend over who doesn’t have many playmates.
 - **Comfort the sick** – Help care for a sick sibling: bring them a favourite blanket or stuffed animal; read them a story; play quietly so as not to disturb their rest; make them a special gift or get-well card.
 - **Instruct the ignorant** – Read to younger siblings, especially stories from the Bible that speak of mercy such as the parable of the **Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)** or the **Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)**. Talk together about what you have learned from these stories.
 - **Pray for the living and the dead** – Pray with and for your family members each day. Don’t forget to include in your prayers your grandparents and other members of your extended family, including those who have died. Remember also your parish family, including your priests. Pray for the sick and the suffering all over the world.
3. **“Live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace”.** (**Eph 4:1-3**)

WEEK 6 CHALLENGE – LIVING THE BEATITUDE AS A COMMUNITY

Action: In this Jubilee year, let us look for opportunities to:

1. **Participate more actively and consistently in works of mercy, uplifting those who are suffering in some way, and restoring hope to their lives.** Here are some suggestions to inspire us:
 - Let us resolve to become more aware of the needs within our own neighbourhoods and, once aware, to do something to meet those needs.

- Explore one of an array of ministries and prayer groups within our parish community, a possible transformative journey in which bonds of faith and fellowship are formed and strengthened. Turn church pews into small cenacles of prayer for one another!
- Donate to our parish charities so that we, as a community, can offer concrete support to those within our parish and local community who struggle to feed their families. Support other local charities that offer assistance to vulnerable persons such as the homeless and the marginalized.

2. **Become an advocate for social justice.**

- Participate more actively in Pro-life issues, standing with and for those who are most vulnerable in our society. Accept willingly that there is a possible price to pay for doing so.

3. *The laity, through their baptism, are called....to sanctify the world through their secular activities, seeking God's kingdom in their daily lives. (Lumen Gentium)*

- Let us always exercise our Christian obligation to vote when elections are called and to vote with Gospel values in mind.
- Let us pray for political leaders at home and throughout the world that they may govern with wisdom, integrity and humility, respecting the worth and dignity of every person so that justice and peace may flourish in their land.
- Prayer and fasting are powerful tools available to all. Let us offer some form of weekly fast and commit to daily prayer for our nation and our world, as an act of repentance and a plea for God's mercy.



St. Joseph is the principal Patron Saint of Canada. Let us pray for his intercession for our country.

Saint Joseph, Patron of Canada, protector and guardian of our beloved homeland. Keep under your sovereign patronage, in this hour of crisis, the unity, the faith and the integrity of your children, the Canadian people, from sea to sea to sea. Amen.

WEEK 7 CHALLENGE – BLESSINGS RECEIVED & CLOSING PRAYER

This week let us give thanks to God for all the blessings He has showered on us throughout these past weeks as we contemplated and lived more fully the Beatitude

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy”

Action: We invite you to pray the following Chaplet which was given to St. Faustina by Jesus.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy: recited using ordinary rosary beads of 5 decades.

- a. **Make the Sign of the Cross**
- b. On the 1st bead, pray **“The Three O’Clock Prayer”**

You expired Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in you. (3x)

- c. On the 2nd bead pray the **“Our Father”**
- d. On the 3rd bead pray the **“Hail Mary”**
- e. On the 4th bead pray the **“Apostles Creed”**
- f. On the 5th bead, and all subsequent “Our Father” beads, pray:



Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

- g. On the 10 “Hail Mary” beads pray:

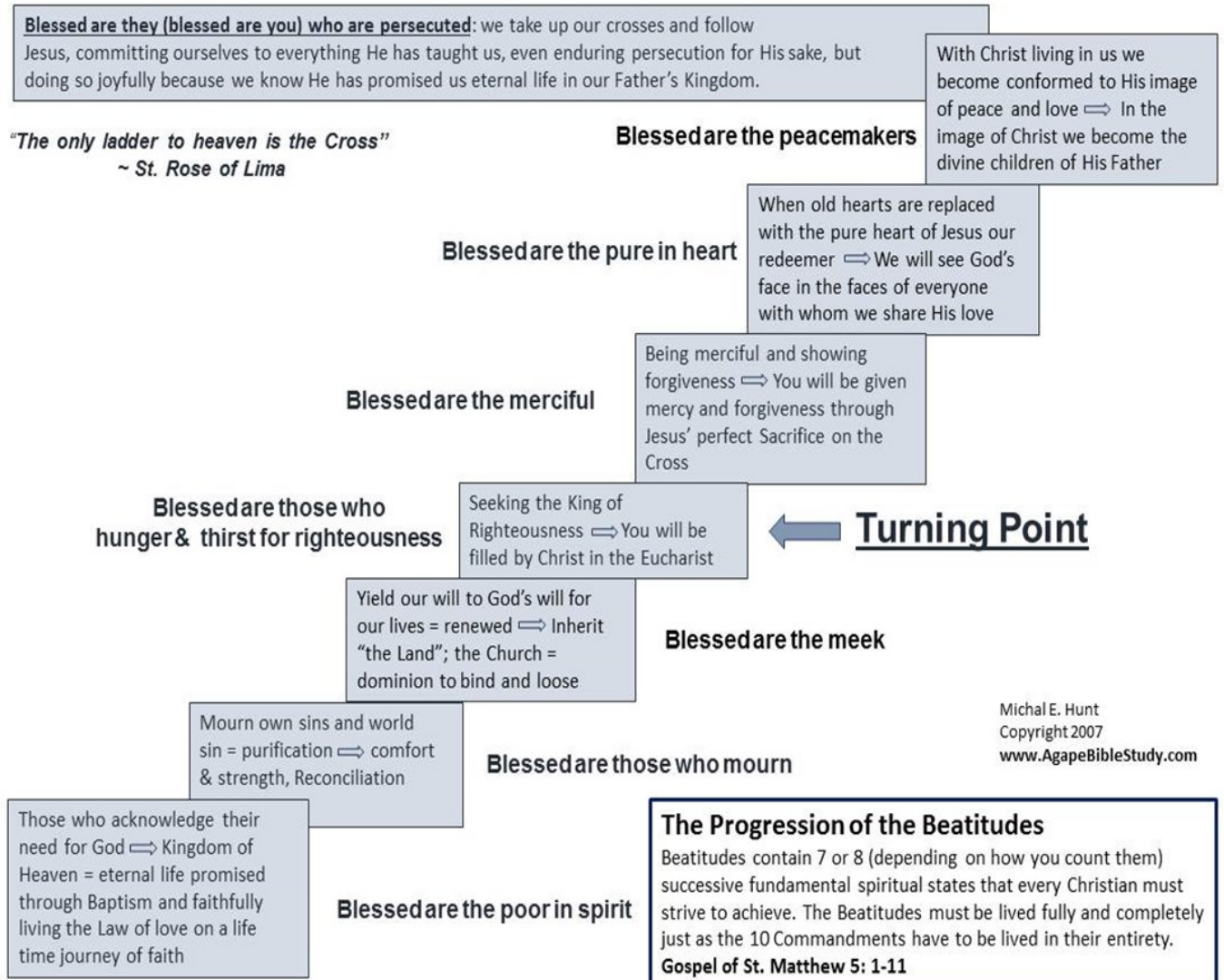
For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

- h. Repeat the **“Eternal Father”** prayer on the ‘Our Father’ beads, and **“For the sake of His sorrowful Passion”** prayer on the 10 “Hail Mary” beads for the remaining 4 decades.
- i. The **concluding doxology** is repeated three times:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. (x3)

Closing Prayer: Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless, and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us, and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments, we might not despair, nor become despondent, but with great confidence, submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy Itself. Amen

THE BEATITUDE LADDER



To learn about the Catholic Women's League
please visit our parish website at
www.divineinfant.on.ca/cwl.html



Catholic Women's League
Divine Infant Parish
Orleans ON

FOUR WAYS TO BE A CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE MEMBER

- Fully Active:** Attends meetings, serves on committees, and takes advantage of the personal and spiritual opportunities the League offers.
- Partially Active:** Is willing to help when able on a task by task basis, wants to be part of the League and wants to make a difference but has limited time to offer.
- Prayerfully Active:** Prays for the League and members
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Membership fee is \$40

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