



## BEATITUDES

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# Beatitudes

-a gift from Christian and Mary Grunška  
-located on south wall in Gathering Area

The Gospel of St. Matthew records Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount, giving eight poetic parallels to teach us the way to the Father (Mt 5:3-12). The list of these eight fundamental attitudes and virtues is called "The Beatitudes". Each beatitude or solemn blessing is expressed in the positive "Blessed are ...", different from many of the Ten Commandments which are expressed in the negative "You shall not...". In giving us the beatitudes as guidelines for living, Jesus calls us to radical detachment from material goods and for their distribution to the poor. He promises this will bring happiness and fullness of life. This window has eight symbols, each representing one of the eight beatitudes found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and taught by the Church.

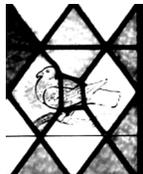
## "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To be poor in spirit is to recognize that all gifts and blessings come from the grace of God and to be open to doing God's will. The **deer or stag** in Christian art symbolizes solitude and the longings of the human soul. "As the deer longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God." (Ps 42:1) The deer or stag is used here as the symbol for those who are poor in spirit, those who stand alone before God, those who recognize their total dependence upon God, those who are ready to bear painful or humble conditions, those who long for God's justice for all.



## "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth."

The meek are those who are humble and bend themselves down before God and others. "The meek shall possess the land." (Psalm 37:11) God's love and care for those who are meek is also evident in other Psalms (22:26, 25:9, 76:9, 147:6, 149:4). The **dove** is the symbol for the meek as it was the humble bird offered as sacrifice at temple, particularly by those who were poor.



## "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

As we grow in gratitude and holiness we truly see ourselves, our society and our world as we are. We experience mourning and regret for our own sins and the sins of this world. We realize that we have hurt God, the one who has been so good to us. Those who mourn in this way shall find comfort in Jesus, the Consoler, and in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. The sorrowing are symbolized by the human **heart** with the **crown of thorns** representing pain. The **cloth** indicates comfort coming from God.



## "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied."

Those who hunger and thirst for justice are those who have a strong, continuous desire for growth in religious and moral perfection, those who desire right treatment, justice and respect for all. Satisfaction comes with continuous growth in holiness. The **ever-green tree** is an appropriate symbol for this beatitude as it remains green throughout the year, having life and growth regardless of changes in weather and temperature.



## "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Building upon the interior desire for justice for all, this beatitude moves us to action. The merciful are those who respond toward others who suffer distress by offering love, compassion and forgiveness. The symbol of the **hand offering the coin**, showing the compassion expressed in almsgiving, represents all merciful actions toward others. The Church gives specific ways for us to live this beatitude.



### The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Clothe the naked  
Shelter the homeless  
Comfort the imprisoned  
Visit the sick  
Bury the dead

### The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Admonish sinners  
Instruct the uninformed  
Counsel the doubtful  
Comfort the sorrowful  
Be patient with those in error  
Forgive offenses  
Pray for the living and the dead

## "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

To be pure or clean of heart is to have simple and sincere good intention, to be free of selfishness and self-seeking desires. It is to focus on another or to take action for the sake of another totally free of any personal gain. The attitude of purity of heart appears several times in the Bible (Job 33:3; Ps 24:4; Ps 73:1; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22). It reflects the idea of God's goodness to the upright and the clean of heart. The **heart on fire** represents those who love God wholeheartedly, with burning passion, devotion and joy.



## "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

Peacemakers live peaceful lives but also try to bring harmony and friendship to others. They work to preserve peace between God and humankind and to restore peace when it has been disturbed. The **bridge** is a symbol for peacemakers who imitate God's love for all by forming the link to bring two different entities together. Since one cannot bring to others that which one does not possess, the peacemaker must continually seek the peace of Christ. Jesus said, "Peace is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you." (Jn 14:27)



## "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus said that those who follow him will be persecuted. "If they persecute me, they will persecute you." (Jn 15:20-21) Through the centuries many Christians have been martyred. Jesus promised that those who are persecuted will be rewarded with the Kingdom of Heaven. The **sword** is the symbol of enmity of unbelievers toward Christians and of the martyrdom of many Christians, often by the sword. The **palm** branch is a symbol for victory, of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and of his victory over sin and death. The palm was used in the catacombs to mark the graves of martyrs. The palm branch is placed *over* the sword to indicate that death does not have the final word. With Christ there is victory over death and the promise of a place in the kingdom of heaven.

