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people hear the message. If the message is heard and absorbed, then it produces the fruit Jesus desires. **The hunger and thirst to which Jesus calls us, is satisfied in seeing some little progress now and its completion in the kingdom, when we try daily to live “Your kingdom come.”** Jesus tells us that just as our bodies crave food and drink, so our hearts desire justice.

## 6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING

- a. Reflect upon a time when someone invited you to a deeper experience of faith.
- b. How do I feel about inviting someone else to join the Catholic Women’s League, as a means of getting to know Jesus better?
- c. One time when I felt impelled to tell someone else that something great had happened to me spiritually was...

## 7. CONCLUSION

What is God’s will for me today? We know that acting contrary to God’s will, is acting without direction. We need to call to Jesus for the guidance from His Holy Spirit. There is very little we can do alone. As St. Paul tells us, we must beg for the spirit to be active in our lives. “We must no longer be children tossed to and fro and blow about ....” (Ephesians 4:14). Jesus show me what Your calling is for me. What is Your calling for me in the field of justice?

## 8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG

Lord, allow Your Holy Spirit to move and breathe in me, to recreate my heart, to fashion me in the image of Jesus (Rom. 12:1-3), that I will be evermore ready to say, “may Your will be done.”

The Lord’s Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven....



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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### TERESA OF AVILA

“...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Mt. 5:6



#### ABOUT TERESA OF AVILA

Teresa of Avila (1515-82), was a Spanish Carmelite nun who lived at a time when her country was experiencing a surge of religious and cultural growth. After some 20 years of a relaxed professed life, however, God touched her heart and she began a state of prayer and love for the Lord more fervent than anything she had known before. As she continued to pray, Teresa was drawn into a deeper union with Christ and was filled with a strong desire that the whole world come to know Him.

In order to sustain this life, Teresa found a new monastery (1562) at Avila where the original Carmelite rule was to be strictly observed. She wrote her autobiography at about this time, as well as *The Way of Perfection*, a guide for her spiritual daughters into the kind of prayer life she enjoyed.

The prayer Teresa described had as its goal union with God, what she called “spiritual marriage”. It was a combination of a specific time set aside each day to be present to the Lord and the practice of being in God’s presence throughout the day. Teresa found that a mixture of vocal and mental prayer was necessary for this life to be nourished and grow.

In the second part of *The Way of Perfection*, Teresa included a profound commentary on the “Our Father”, both explaining to her daughters how this prayer should be said, and commenting on the many aspects of the Christian life that pertain to the prayer. The following passages are taken from this commentary and contain part of Teresa’s words on the phrase, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

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*“Look daughters, His will must be done whether we like this or not, and it will be done in heaven and on earth. Believe me, take my advice and make a virtue of necessity. O my Lord, what a great comfort this is for me, that You didn’t want the fulfillment of Your will to depend on a will as wretched as mine! May You be blessed forever and may all things praise You! Your name be glorified forever!*

*I’d be in a fine state, Lord, if it were up to me as to whether or not Your will were to be done! Now I freely give mine to You, even though I do so at a time in which I’m not free of self-interest. For I have felt and have had great experience of the gain that comes from freely abandoning my will to Yours. O friends, what a great gain there is here! O what a great loss there is when we do not carry out what we offer to the Lord in the “Our Father”!*

*Before I tell you about what is gained, I want to explain the great deal you offer so that afterward you won’t take back what you gave, claiming that you hadn’t understood. Don’t be like some religious who do nothing but promise; and when we don’t follow through, we make an excuse saying we didn’t understand what we were promising. And this could be so, because to say that we abandon our will to another’s will seems very easy until, through experience, we realize that this is the hardest thing one can do if one does it as it should be done...*

*Well, I want to advise you and remind you what His will is. Don’t fear that it means He will give you riches, or delights, or honours, or all these earthly things. His love for you is not that small, and He esteems highly what you give Him. He wants to repay you well, for He gives you his kingdom while you are still alive.*

*Do you want to know how He answers those who say these words to Him sincerely? Ask His glorious Son, who said them while praying in the garden. Since they were said with such determination and complete willingness, see if the Father’s will wasn’t done fully in Him through the trials, sorrows, injuries and persecutions He suffered until his life came to an end through death on a cross.*

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## BEATITUDE #4

“...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Mt. 5:6

**OPENING PRAYER:** May I gain a deep knowledge of Your will for me, O God of all wisdom.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I want to know God and His will for my life more than anything. **I am excited about God’s will for the world, “Thy will be done,”** more than my own financial gain, success, career, or acceptance by my peers. I long for God’s perspective in my decision making. I believe in justice for all people, that which is necessary to become fully human in the image of Jesus.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Spirituality**—The ability to maintain spiritual priorities and to cause others to seek a deeper walk with Christ. To have the courage to say, “Your will be done,” and strive daily to live it.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCE

As Jesus lived on the food of His father’s will (Jn. 4:34), these people long to see God’s will be done in everything. They understand clearly that what God wants is always best. On the surface, God’s will may cause pain, but deep down it always gives peace and satisfaction. The sign that a person is truly led by God’s will is simply this: the fruits of the spirit grow in them—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, gentleness and self-control.

### 4. GOSPEL READING—MATTHEW 13:3-9 THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

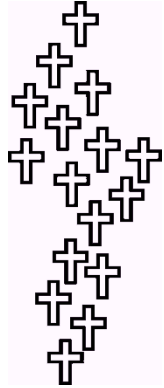
### 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

As Jesus interprets this parable for the disciples, He makes it clear that the quality of soil symbolizes the different ways

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days. The outspoken Dorothy made her way by using her hidden gift of **gentleness** caring for the poor and destitute. She is a **prime example of today's society, where many are in a power struggle to win and then find themselves the winners when they turn to gentleness rather than strength and let the Lord enter.**

Although Dorothy was concerned with conditions on earth, she kept her eyes focused on heaven. She often said that eternal life begins now and was fond of quoting St. Catherine of Siena, "All the way to heaven is heaven, because He said, 'I am the way.'"



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*... He gives according to the courage He sees in each and the love each has for His majesty. He will see that whoever loves Him much will be able to suffer much for Him; whoever loves Him little will be capable of little...*

*So, if you love Him, strive that what you say to the Lord may not amount to mere polite words... This is no way to mock Him who was the butt of so much mockery for our sakes.*



*Even if there were no other reason, it would not be right to mock Him so often; the number of times we say the 'Our Father' is not small. Let's give Him the jewel [of our wills] once and for all, no matter how many times we have tried to give it before."*

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## BEATITUDE #5

“...Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Mt. 5:7

**OPENING PRAYER:** Give me the grace to see my sinfulness and to know Your tender mercy, loving God.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I can be merciful to others. Having heard the message of Jesus I can respond to human weakness with forgiving love.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Sensitivity**—The ability to pick up on the hurt and pain of others and be “present” to their hurts. Mercy leads to concern for the wrongdoer as well as for the wrong being done. No questions are asked. We are sensitive to caring for the need, as we see it at this moment.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

Many of us have experienced that our very best friend is one we have hurt during our relationship and she/he has forgiven us over and over again. Our friend does not accuse us or remind us of our failure. Our friend puts all that in the past. To show us that we are forgiven, our friend invites us back to her/his home, picks us up in our sadness and gives us the support and comfort we need to live, as the “merciful Jesus.” Daily we need to ask for the grace to be merciful, for when we are forgiving and showing comfort to others, our Lord, too, will be merciful to us.

### 4. GOSPEL READING—LUKE 10:30-37 THE GOOD SAMARITAN



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The marriage lasted less than a year. She then bought a beach cottage where she began living with an irresponsible political radical, who had a deep interest in the natural sciences. He used to insist on walks, no matter how cold or rainy it was. A whole new world opened up to the girl who had grown up in the city. Dorothy credits her common-law husband's love of creation with bringing her to the Creator of all things. "How can there be no God, when there are all these beautiful things?" It got to the point where it was the simple question of whether she chose God or humankind.

Dorothy became a Catholic, receiving the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. As she began to live Christianity in a serious way, Dorothy did not abandon her concerns for the poor.

Dorothy was invited by a French peasant philosopher to assist him in publishing a paper called *The Catholic Worker*. The first issue was distributed in New York City on May 1, 1933. The first press run was 2,500. In two years, the circulation rose to over 100,000. Requests for bundles of the papers came from schools and seminaries around the country. Homeless people began to come to Dorothy's door looking for the houses of hospitality described in the paper. Dorothy rented one apartment, then another, until finally *The Catholic Worker* was in its own building. A pot of soup and coffee were always simmering on the stove.

As time passed, various men and women came to join Dorothy in her work. Some came for a weekend and wound up staying for life.

The depression years were followed by the world drifting into war in the 1940s. People in worker houses and farms were encouraged to grow food to feed the hungry, to care for the wounded and to fast and pray for peace.

More stresses followed in Dorothy Day's life in the 1950s by the hydrogen bomb, atmospheric testing and civil defense drills. Witnessing to the fact there is a power greater than death, Dorothy refused to participate in New York City defence drills. For this she was sentenced to several jail terms of up to 30



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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### DOROTHY DAY

“...Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Mt. 5:5

#### **ABOUT DOROTHY DAY**

Dorothy Day was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1897, one of five children of John Day, a sportswriter. She led a sheltered life until she left for college at the age of 16.



Dorothy spent much of her childhood with books. At the age of 15, her reading became more socially conscious. Her older brother, Donald, was working on a description of the struggles in the labour movement and inhumane working conditions in some factories. Dorothy read these accounts.

Although her family did not attend church, Dorothy had brief favourable experiences in various churches. These made her wonder how the religious people she met related to the poverty and suffering of others.

**The search for the abundant life for herself and for everyone else, especially the destitute, was with Dorothy all of her life. That was the theme of her life. She wanted everyone to be kind. She hoped for every home to be open to the lame and the blind. She knew that in love sprung the abundant life but she did not have the slightest idea how to find it.**

Dorothy dropped out of college after her second year and got a job as a reporter for a socialist daily. In November 1917, when she had just turned 20, she joined a demonstration for voting rights for women in Washington, D.C.

Dorothy was taken in by the mad rush of living. Falling in love with an older man, Dorothy had an affair, became pregnant and had an abortion, something she regretted all her life. On the rebound, Dorothy then married a man some 20 years older than her.

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## 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

The Samaritan does not question why this man is lying injured by the side of the road. He does not inquire into the man's past; he is not concerned whether the injured man is a good person or not or whether he has the same religious belief or political convictions. The Samaritan sees only one thing: here is a person in misery who needs his help and he gives it generously.



## 6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING

- a. What is my reaction when I see someone in my neighbourhood who has a need?
- b. How do I reach out in my CWL council to develop a sense of belonging to members?
- c. How do I work with others to better develop a sense of community in my parish?

## 7. CONCLUSION

Time and again, mercy offers to another the chance to make a new start. Like love, mercy never despairs; it recalls always that there is more good in others than we realize. The merciful spoken of in this Beatitude is not so much one who is showing mercy, but rather one who has become, as it were, a transparency through whom the mercy of Christ can shine.

## 8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG

Lord, I ask for a forgiving heart, a heart that will soften when mercy needs to be shown to others who have caused pain and hurt in my life.

Fill my mind with memories of Your blessings so that my past hurts may be forgotten and that I will, in turn, love my brothers and sisters in the fullness of love.

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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### TERESA OF CALCUTTA

“...Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Mt. 5:7



#### **ABOUT TERESA OF CALCUTTA**

Teresa (Gonxha Boyaxhiu) was born in Skopje, Yugoslavia, in 1912. She had one living sister and brother and other girls in the family died at a very young age.

Her father was a grocer and a druggist. Teresa had been used to a comfortable life and when her father died in 1919, she suddenly had nothing. Her home had been a place for politicians to gather to hold their meetings, but suddenly her home became more of a religious centre. Her mother was unusually religious, and also had a deep interest in missions, whereby she began feeding and helping local people.

Teresa, at the age of 13, was about to leave home. At this early age she too became interested in missionary work. It was hard for her mother to let her go far away to join the Loretto Sisters, knowing full well that she would never see her again. Both Teresa and her mother knew though, that the choice was right.

On November 29, 1928, young Teresa arrived in Dublin. She had come here on her way to India to learn English at the Convent of Loretto, the congregation that she had planned to join.

In 1931, Teresa took her first vows and chose the name of Teresa of Avila and even more, the little Therese of Lisieux. She then was sent to a school for girls in the district of Calcutta where she taught history and geography. While teaching these subjects, she discovered Calcutta, long known as the cesspool of the world, and there, in 1946, her real vocation began.

It was on September 10, 1946, when she heard the call from God

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exhibit tremendous strength, a strength rooted in God Himself.

**6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING**

- a. How can I grow in my everyday life to become a more gentle person?
- b. Have I ever experienced a time in my life when the presence of God enabled me to be calm and gentle, when ordinarily, without His help, it would have been impossible?
- c. A time in my life when turning my head toward God gave me the ability to accept a “loss” rather than a “win” was ... How did I feel?

**7. CONCLUSION**

Gentleness is a fruit of the realization of God’s love for me as I am. Once I am sure of God’s acceptance, I can afford to be gentle because when God Himself considers me worthwhile, there is no further need to assert myself.

**8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG**

Lord, protect me from striving to outdo the evildoers or emulate those who do wrong.

For like grass they soon wither and fade like the green of spring.

Lord, teach me to replace violence and excessive competitiveness with gentleness, thereby setting creation free.

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## BEATITUDE #3

“...Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Mt. 5:5

**OPENING PRAYER:** In your presence, Lord, I pray for the gentleness required to relate to each person with whom I come in contact.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I can really feel the empty places in my life. I can be tender and gentle with people. I have given the control of my life to God and I don't have to “win” all the time.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Gentleness**—The ability to be tender because you are inwardly strong and to lead without overpowering others.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

You and I have experienced that there is a power in meekness that the violent cannot understand. We might say that meekness controls anger and expresses it in ways which are appropriate, proportionate and never destructive. Frustration and stress are inevitable in our society, so it is essential for families to work out ways to bring greater gentleness to the home.

### 4. GOSPEL READING—MATTHEW 6:1-6

### 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

Hypocrites consume much energy, yet accomplish relatively little. Moreover, they make a great fuss about the little they do, and require much patting on the back just to keep going. All this is the opposite of the gentleness spoken of in the Beatitudes. The gentle of the gospel do not take themselves too seriously, and their healthy sense of humour prevents them from being the centre of attention. The “gentle” of the gospel does not refer to weakness. On the contrary, the gentle

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to give up all and follow Christ into the slums to serve Him among the poorest of poor. She felt this to be a fresh vocation, a vocation within a vocation, as she herself expressed. On August 16, 1948, she received permission to change from the uniform of the Loretto order to the customary cheap Indian sari, and she left Loretto and began her work in Calcutta. Mother Teresa, a tiny nun, is the foundress of the Missionaries of Charity.

As in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, for Teresa there was no difference between the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich. **Mother Teresa firmly believed that the world will be saved by the poor, not the rich.** The modern world had no time to hope, to love or to be loved. The poor were the hope and the love. She firmly believed that for God, the rich and the poor had the same worth, the same dignity.

The prayer written seven centuries ago by St. Francis of Assisi has become so closely associated with Mother Teresa that she could almost be considered its author.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And, where there is sadness, joy.

Mother Teresa opened more than 200 homes throughout the world. One of the homes is a rambling old convent in Washington, D.C., the Gift of Peace, a home for about 35 men and women who are homeless and suffering from AIDS. Here, the patients can live and die in peace and dignity, surrounded by the love of the Missionaries of Charity and lay volunteers.

The work provides numerous opportunities to pray; walking the residents to chapel; bathing them or massaging their swollen legs; changing their bandages (which causes terrible pain at times). Sometimes the prayer is that God—in His mercy—would take a suffering resident home quickly—and God is faithful.

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## BEATITUDE #6

“...Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Mt. 5:8

**OPENING PRAYER:** Let us pray to know our God intimately and to be drawn into life wholeheartedly by this love.

### 1. **FOCUS**

I have come to the place where I can be completely open and honest with God and others—transparent because I have nothing to hide. I don't have to put on airs or pretend to be what I am not.

### 2. **GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE**

**Simplicity**—Purity of heart is that simplicity, that transparency, which permeates our lives when our deepest selves are rooted in God and His will for us. When the heart is pure, one sees the effect of the spirit's influence through our spontaneous actions.

### 3. **SHARING EXPERIENCES**

We have all met a person who held us in awe. We admire this person because their response to us is spontaneous, simple and God-centred. The response is not manipulation, not hypocrisy nor cunning. We recognize the heart filled with a singleness of purpose (God alone is my direction), as the response in action bubbles up in actions directed to God. We invariably say—I can see Jesus in that person. She/he appears so pure, so see-through. She/he is genuine, the goodness, the simpleness of God penetrates through her/him. We often compare that person to being as clear as water in a glass.

### 4. **GOSPEL READING—MATTHEW 6:19-23 CONCERNING TREASURES AND THE SOUND EYE**

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Francois Charon, there were only two elderly brothers and four old men living there. With the amalgamation of the two charitable organizations, the number of people grew rapidly, with the influx of people including the elderly, the orphaned, the infirm, the sick and the abandoned, small pox patients, wounded soldiers, foundlings, abandoned children and on and on.

Mother d'Youville burned with the love of God. The pain suffered by embittered old people, beggars, alcoholics and drug addicts who came to her door was her pain, too. For her, they all represented Christ and Christ was her whole life. **Marguerite understood that help for the wounded or handicapped and comfort for the sick or dying went beyond simple medical treatment.**

Not being able to accommodate everyone in the old grey house, she decided to reach out to them, thus, every morning, she or one of her sisters would visit people in their homes. She nursed, bathed, washed and bandaged her patients. She cleaned their homes and gave them food and drink. But most important, she dried their tears, and brought smiles to lips or a twinkle to a young child's eye.

Later, she founded the first children's nursery for abused and homeless children. By 1771, the year she died, she welcomed no less than 318 children and, by 1959, the year of her beatification, 64,687 children had passed through the hands of the Grey Nuns.

In fidelity to the spirit of their foundress, the Sisters of Charity, Grey Nuns, continue to labour attuned to the weakness and solitude of the sick, the handicapped and aged, the drug addict and the alcoholic, the hunger of the poor and the homeless.

Marguerite d'Youville, a channel to God's poor, continues to make visible the tenderness of the Father towards all, assisting in the mission of Jesus Christ and the extension of the Kingdom of God. Marguerite d'Youville was called to God on December 23, 1771.



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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### MARGUERITE d'YOUVILLE

“...Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Mt. 5:4

#### ABOUT MARGUERITE d'YOUVILLE

Marie-Marguerite was born on October 15, 1701, in Varennes, Quebec. She lost her father when she was seven years old and, from then on, her life was marked by suffering – an unhappy marriage, widowhood at the age of 28, and the loss of four children in infancy.



While a poor widow, she was never satisfied simply to look after her own needs, but was steadfast in her determination to help others less fortunate than herself. Her great devotion to God the Father, in whom she placed her complete confidence, had brought her to the understanding that all human beings were brothers and sisters who had to help one another.

From the early years of her widowhood, she was filled with evident charity for her neighbour. She made it a matter of duty and honour to visit the poor, the sick and the imprisoned, sharing her own scant resources to comfort the Saviour's suffering people. People watched in amazement as she even went door to door begging funds to give criminals a decent burial.

By 1737, three young ladies assisted her charitable work. The four women made a secret and holy pact “to live together and to assist as many poor as they could.” The congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal was born and their small house on Notre-Dame Street was soon filled to overflowing. In 1745, a fire left Marguerite, her associates and her wards, without a roof over their heads.

In 1747, Marguerite was appointed administrator of the Hôpital General des Frères Charon, another charitable organization whose building, in desperate need of repair, was located by the Saint-Pierre River. After the death of the hospice's founder, Jean-

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## 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

Remember where your treasure is, your head is there also. If we treasure God in the desires He places in our hearts, in the voices of other people, in the urgings to help another, in the movement toward greater truth and love, then our heart will be there also. The purest of heart sees the goodness of God reflected in the little things of life, in a simple way.

The lamp of the body is the eye. It follows that if your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light. As one lives out this Beatitude, God becomes visible in all His creation. A person begins to regain the innocence and simplicity of childhood that wonders at sunsets, flowers, birds and all of God's creatures.

## 6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING

- a. How did I relate to God when I was a child/teenager? Is there some experience which stands out to illustrate this?
- b. Where have I felt God's support in my adult life? How have my thoughts about God changed over the years?
- c. For which moments of grace in my past life am I especially thankful?

## 7. CONCLUSION

When scripture speaks about the human heart, it means the deep inner self of the person, the place where a person really lives. A person's choices are not made just with the head. We follow the voice of our hearts. Our choices emerge, not from a carefully worked out plan, but according to deep longings within our inner self.

Purity of heart is that simplicity, that transparency, which permeates our lives when our deepest selves are rooted in God and His will.

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## 8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG

### Prayer to St. Therese, The Little Flower

St. Therese, The Little Flower, please pick me a rose from your heavenly garden and send it to me with a message of love; ask God to grant me the favours that I implore and tell Him that I will love Him daily more and more. Amen.

*It is to just such as these  
that the kingdom of God belongs.*



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then He cured her. Jesus, therefore, teaches us that cure without care is meaningless. It keeps us at a distance, unwilling or unable to share another's burdens.

**6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING**

- a. Who are the people in my life who have comforted me?
- b. What are concrete ways that I can follow Jesus' example of showing my individual care to another person?
- c. How can I use my experience of healing to help others? An example from my life is ...

**7. CONCLUSION**

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Strengthener, comes to provide us with the assistance, comfort and strength that we need. Therefore, blessed are those who turn away from their old ways and submit to God, for they shall be given strength and comfort to **care** for their needy brothers and sisters.

**8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG**

Lord,            teach me how to love, like You love  
                  to pour out my love for another.  
                  Teach me how to care, like You care  
                  Lord, I have so much to learn from You.

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## BEATITUDE #2

“...Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Mt. 5:4

**OPENING PRAYER:** Open my heart to the mystery of love so that I may enter into the heart of God.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I can really feel the empty places in my life. I can let others know when I am hurting and share the grief of others by showing that I care. I can weep with them like Jesus did without showing embarrassment.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Empathy**—The ability to feel what others feel; to laugh and cry with others.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

To really “care” means that someone really enters deeply into my sorrow and pain before they attempt to do anything about it. If someone really cares, their reaction will be to unite their mind and heart with mine before taking action to cure my pain. The spiritual and emotional comfort happens in the waiting with my whole being.

### 4. GOSPEL READING—MARK 5:25-34 or LUKE 8:42-48

### 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?” He looked all around to see who had done it. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.” Care, therefore, becomes a participation in the pain of another, a solidarity in suffering. Jesus showed His sharing and His care by desiring to speak directly to the woman, and she was comforted. She was no longer a number. Jesus showed His individual care for her during that time period. He entered deeply into her pain and

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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### THERESE OF LISIEUX

“...Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Mt. 5:8

#### ABOUT THERESE OF LISIEUX – THE LITTLE FLOWER

Therese Martin entered a Carmelite convent in France in 1888 when she was 15. As Sister Therese of the Child Jesus, she lived a hidden life. She died when she was 24, never having had much contact with anyone beyond her family and the Carmelite nuns.

The world came to know her through her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*. She described her life as a “little way of spiritual childhood.” She lived each day with unshakable confidence in God’s love.

The book reveals Therese Martin as a girl and young woman of hope, the saint of abandonment, a perfect model of humility, the master of spiritual childliness, **the charm of simplicity**.

Why does she attract people of today? Why is it that many serious thinkers point to her as a “beacon of light” in the darkness of our times?

Love, that is the word – and that is what Therese Martin is all about. From her earliest days she was fascinated by love and determined to plumb its depths regardless of personal cost. She was a genius driven by a ferocious desire to unlock nothing else but the mystery of life itself. “How,” she cried out, “can a soul as imperfect as mine aspire to the possession of love?” The key to Therese Martin’s personality was determination, and although imperfect, she was determined to reach out and possess love.

She symbolized herself as a little flower. The symbol was deceptive. Her purpose in using it was to explain that like a tiny wild flower in the forest, she survived and indeed flourished through all the seasons of the year, through the warmth of spring and summer as well as the winds and snows of fall and winter. It was her way of saying, “I am a lot stronger than I look. Don’t let appearances fool you.”

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She prayed that Christ would be her support for one day at a time and pleaded for His smile “just for today.”

Therese summed it all up this way, “What does it matter, Lord, if the future is bleak! I cannot pray for tomorrow’s needs... keep my heart pure, keep me in your shade just for today.”

Therese was living in complete union with Christ. As the last year and a half of her life began, she started to walk a dreadful Way of the Cross. Sometime during the evening and morning hours of Holy Thursday and Good Friday, 1896, the tuberculosis, which had afflicted her for the previous two years, caused hemorrhaging.

For Therese, the blood-letting was a sign that Christ would soon take her to Himself and that her days of exile would soon be over, She had a presentiment that her activity after death would extend far beyond the influence of her autobiography.

“My mission – to make God loved – will begin after my death,” she said. “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses.” Countless lives have been touched by her intercession and thousands have imitated her “little way.” She has been acclaimed the “greatest saint of modern times.” Everywhere in the world the roses continue to fall.



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biographers recorded that the wounds of Christ were impressed upon her hands and feet, thus giving her the opportunity to share more intimately in the sufferings of Jesus.

Catherine founded a monastery of cloistered Dominican Sisters at Belcaro. In the midst of her work at the monastery, Catherine began having a series of mystical experiences that prompted her to write her book *The Dialogue*, written through dictation to secretaries.

Catherine's active life and prayer life cannot be separated. **Catherine experienced the reality that being in union with God affects every fibre of our being and every action of our life. This fact of life is the meeting ground between humanity and divinity. Not only did Catherine's visions shape her life, but her life shaped her visions.**

In April, friends overheard her praying that God would take her heart and use it for the church. Then God showed her a vision in which He took her heart, and blessed the church with her blood. She thanked God for letting her take part in the struggle for unity and healing and on April 29, 1380, she exclaimed "Into your hands I entrust my spirit," and she died.





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maid's work. In addition, they forbade Catherine to be alone where she could think of God. **This did not stop Catherine. She made a prayer space in her heart that she would be able to remain in contact with God.** She found a way to be in touch with Him while she did the laundry and the cooking.

One day, her father observed Catherine praying instead of attending to her work. Suddenly, a white dove appeared over Catherine's head. At this sign, Catherine's father decided to help Catherine keep her vow to God, that she remain single. He also gave Catherine a little room so she could pray in privacy.



Thirteen years old and unable to read, Catherine meditated on what was available to her – the little crucifix on the wall of her room. She experienced God's love for her flowing from the cross. As her life of solitude continued, Catherine wanted to read in order to learn more about God. She pleaded with God and soon began to read fluently, thus changing her form of prayer to include the Divine Office.

She lived in solitude for three years. Then, on Shrove Tuesday in 1367, her life took another turn. In a vision, Jesus united Himself to her in mystical marriage. Before long, Catherine felt called to leave the solitude of her cell to share what she had learned there and to serve the poor and sick people of Siena.

At 24 years of age, Catherine lacked formal education, yet scholarly men accepted her spiritual guidance and powerful preaching. Even her confessors accepted her counsel. Catherine was challenged by women, as many disapproved of her being treated equal to men. The fact that a woman held conversations with men and appeared in public often fostered rumours about her.

Catherine's work continued in helping the sick, especially in 1374 when the Black Death hit Siena, killing one-third of the population. Added to this work, she began teaching repentance. While Catherine was in Pisa praying before the crucifix in the Church of Santa Cristina, **Jesus spoke to her from the cross.** Her

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## BEATITUDE #7

“...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Mt 5:9

**OPENING PRAYER:** I pray for the gift of inner peace, a peace that bears the fruit of goodwill and reconciliation, a peace that brings harmony to the community of all peoples.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I really work at keeping the channels of communication open between me and those around me. I deal with anger and disagreements immediately and don't allow them to fester. I encourage those around me to work out their differences without hurting one another.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Peacemaking**—The ability to harmonize differences between others without causing either person to “lose.”

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

It is one thing to possess inner peace and to rejoice in that possession. It is a much greater challenge to strive to make peace possible for others. This Beatitude does not highlight the inner attitudes of the disciple, but the way a Christian should relate to others. There is no excuse for not being an active peacemaker. Our very existence depends on it.

### 4. SCRIPTURE READING—1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-15

### 5. REFLECTION ON THE SCRIPTURE READING

Paul gives the Thessalonians some practical instructions for keeping and making peace among themselves. To be a peacemaker is to run the risk of being rejected. It takes courage and humility to bring about a reconciliation with

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someone who has harmed you. It takes even greater fortitude to try to make peace in the lives of people who are hostile to their family or neighbours. Being called to be the peacemaker does not allow us to look the other way and not get involved.

## 6. **QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING**

- a. How do I respond when a neighbour offends me?
- b. What are some risks that I have taken in my life? What have I lost and what have I gained because of the risk?
- c. What concrete risk is the Lord asking me to take at this time to bring peace in a situation?

## 7. **CONCLUSION**

Being a peacemaker involves tact and sincerity. It means breaking down alienation and creating new ways for people to think about each other and to relate to one another.

To be a peacemaker is very much in line with the mission of Christ. He was announced by the prophet Isaiah as the “Prince of Peace” and at birth the angels sang, “Glory to God and peace to His people.” Christ does not merely bring glory to God and peace to His people; He is it. He is the peace between us.

## 8. **CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG**

Lord, I pray for a deep love among my brothers and sisters, a love that deepens in times of differences and difficulties as well as in times of joy and success.



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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### CATHERINE OF SIENA

“...Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. 5:3

#### **ABOUT CATHERINE OF SIENA**

In 1347, Catherine Benincasa was born in Siena, Italy. She was the 24<sup>th</sup> child of Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa.

At the age of six, Catherine and her older brother Stephen went for a walk to visit their sister who lived on the outskirts of Buonaventura. According to legend, Catherine looked over the valley toward the church and saw a vision of Jesus sitting on a throne with the apostles Peter, Paul and John the Evangelist standing beside Him. Jesus looked directly at Catherine, approached her and marked her forehead with the sign of the cross. A few years later, Catherine had a vision of Mary and Jesus in which Mary presented Catherine to her Son. Catherine considered this a sign that she should consecrate herself solely to Jesus.

Catherine did not attend school. Girls were not taught to read in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, Catherine went to church and studied the stained glass windows and the statues in order to find out about the saints. She listened to the prayers at church and the sermons at mass, learning how the saints proved their love for God by accepting insults, torture and death.

When Catherine turned 12, her family forbade her to walk the streets alone to attend daily mass, yet, she was old enough to marry. Some of her brothers found a suitable bachelor for her. Catherine knew she could no longer remain silent, so she announced to her family the inner commitment she had made and she refused to marry anyone. This upset the family and they took severe measures with Catherine by having her do all the kitchen

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## 5. REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL READING

The Samaritan woman comes a long way from the simple request for water. This important theme seems to be carried out as an example of the possibilities of a journey from no faith in Jesus to a full acceptance of Him. She confesses her failure and recognizes Jesus' acceptance of her, even though He knew of her imperfections all along. Her life style did not stop Jesus from approaching her and inviting her to follow Him.

This gospel enables us to better understand how Jesus reaches out to sinners, leading each one in their daily life. In turn, this woman leads the way and, in her poverty of spirit, draws the villagers to come to meet Jesus. "It is no longer of Your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

## 6. QUESTIONS

- a. What qualities do you recognize in a person who models the first Beatitude, being "poor in spirit"?
- b. How have I been like the Samaritan woman in making a choice for a deeper, fuller relationship with Jesus?
- c. Have I ever proclaimed my belief in the Lord and shared it openly with another?

## 7. CONCLUSION

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" can be best explained by this scripture reading: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give them will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn. 4:14)

## 8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG

My being proclaims Your greatness, and my spirit finds joy in You, God my Saviour. God, You who are mighty, have done great things for me. Holy is Your name.

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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS

“...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Mt. 5:9



#### **ABOUT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS**

Marguerite Bourgeoys was born in the town of Troyes, France, on April 17, 1620. Marguerite knew God was calling her to a special vocation, but she did not know what He was calling her to until, one day, she received a personal invitation from de Maisonneuve to come to Canada. When the decision was reached that she would go to Canada, Marguerite felt at peace.

In the autumn of 1653, she made her way across the Atlantic to Canada to settle in Ville Marie, now the city of Montreal. Her task was to develop educational opportunities for the aboriginal children and the families of the French settlers. She began an order of sisters called the Congregation of Notre Dame.

While providing formal instruction, first in Ville Marie and later in the schools throughout the colony, Marguerite and her companions introduced vocational courses for young adolescents, gave assistance to those preparing for marriage, and willingly participated in assisting in whatever was planned to promote the well-being of everyone. It soon became clear that she had to work with many different groups of people – missionaries, pastors, church wardens, coordinators of one category or another, with the parish and civic communities, heads of families – not to mention those who were shouldering burdensome responsibilities in the highest ecclesiastical and governmental offices in the land.

Contact with officials, whether such persons were in Montreal, Quebec or Paris, was sustained as a matter of necessity, since the general well-being of the people depended in no small degree on the good will of the governing groups. She came to know the colonists very well and they were perfectly at home with her.

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Their problems were her problems and her purposes corresponded to their needs.

Marguerite used to say that in community, everyone is expected to move uncomplainingly from one task to another as circumstances demanded. Open-heartedness characterized Mother Bourgeoys' daily life. Like St. Paul, she would sometimes "come out strong" with a set of demanding principles as a basis for community living. Also like St. Paul, when it came to the practical application of these, she would always remember the person. The importance of communication was stressed by Mother Bourgeoys. The power of patient discernment was one of Mother Bourgeoys' greatest gifts, thus enabling her to be a peacemaker as well as a strong leader in her community efforts.



*Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they will be called children of God.*

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## BEATITUDE #1

“...Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. 5:3

**OPENING PRAYER:** I pray to know our God intimately and to be drawn into His life wholeheartedly.

### 1. FOCUS

Poor in spirit—I have come to the place where I can feel accepted by God when I feel most unacceptable to myself. I recognize my need for God and know that I do not have to earn my God’s love with wealth, status or spiritual sophistication. The person who is so poor in spirit stands before God empty-handed, knowing that all is a gift from God.

### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Self-acceptance**—The ability to accept ourselves and our imperfections (poverty of spirit) and to be more accepting of others. This individual has a non-possessive attitude that willingly shares God’s gifts with others, realizing that the human person is worth more than possessions.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

Many of us can say that the happiest people we meet are those who live their poverty for the kingdom of heaven. It is also noticeable that the poor are the ones who share most readily. In our affluent and consumer-oriented society, we have to learn how to be poor. We live in a strange world, where two-thirds of the world’s population have barely enough on which to survive and where Jesus is unknown. We are called to make efforts to reach out to others, knowing that people are a gift from God. We are called to realize, too, that God loves us unconditionally. We are called to love others unconditionally.

### 4. GOSPEL READING—JOHN 4:4-30 THE SAMARITAN WOMAN



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After this, I gave myself to the Lord just as it is written in Philippians 3:8-14, a passage which is linked to Lydia's life, told by St. Paul to the Philippians. "I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and to share His sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come: I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls me upward to receive in Christ Jesus."

Daily, I focus on my call from the Lord. I am very blessed that our Lord helped me to vividly understand His role for me, which began at my baptism. I thank God for the tears of my mother on my baptism day, for the time she took to share with me her personal disappointment and for the revelation that has come through it all.

(To all CWL members: If you wish to share your story with someone, I would be more than willing to listen and pray with you.)

Vivian Bosch

National Spiritual Development Chairperson

February 1993

Jesus Christ is Lord

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## BEATITUDE #8

“...Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. 5:10

**OPENING PRAYER:** I thank You, God, for the love manifested in the crucifixion of Jesus.

### 1. FOCUS

I have come to the place where I know my purpose in life and for this cause, I am not afraid to suffer and, if need be, die. I am willing “take the heat,” and stand alone for what is right. I can take criticism without feeling self-pity or self-righteousness.



### 2. GIFT BASED ON THE BEATITUDE

**Endurance**—The ability to stand up for what you believe without becoming defensive or compromising your principles.

### 3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

Often times we hear the question asked, “Why do bad things happen to people who try so hard to follow Jesus?” We keep looking for the rewards of goodness in this life, forgetting what happened to Jesus and to so many of His followers.

### 4. SCRIPTURE READING—JOHN 15:18-21

### 5. REFLECTION ON THE SCRIPTURE READING

In Jesus’ last talk with His disciples on the night before He died, Jesus tried to prepare them for the days ahead. “If the world hates you, remember that it hated Me before you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own . . . A servant is not greater than his master.” To be persecuted in the cause of right brings us close to Jesus. At times, it is a grace to be an outcast, to be looked down on.

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## 6. QUESTIONS AND GROUP SHARING

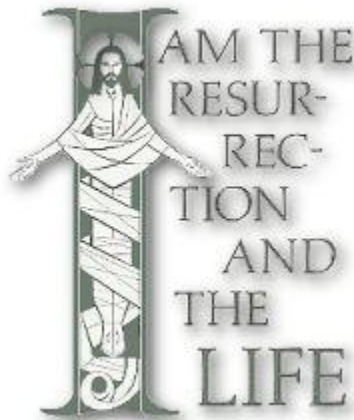
- a. How have my values as a person been challenged or undermined by others?
- b. Was there a situation in my life when I was consoled by the fact that Jesus suffered similar experiences in His life?
- c. In what ways is it difficult to follow Jesus?

## 7. CONCLUSION

There are such a variety of responses to being insulted, rejected and persecuted. Many people spontaneously react with vengeance. They are not satisfied until they can get even with someone who has hurt them. Then there is the person who sincerely tries to live this Beatitude. This person sees persecution as an opportunity to be like Jesus and be more deeply a part of the kingdom.

## 8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG

Loving God, be my companion in suffering and in joy. May I love generously, laying down my life in ways that bring Your peace to the world. Amen.



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I went on to read her story and found that Lydia was very independent and well respected. She was a successful business woman. She was a woman who did her work with enthusiasm and purpose of mind. Her work gave her contact with many interesting people. She did not become totally engrossed in her work, but took time to worship the true God. Some years later, when Paul wrote about the Philippian Church from his Roman prison, he mentioned the women who worked hard with him to spread the gospel, and Lydia was one of them.

Lydia was open to the things of God because her heart longed for this deeper experience of faith. Our Lord could reach her heart easily because it was already set on Him and she was sensitive to His word. Lydia was baptized later in life. By baptism, she said without words, "I identify myself with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and I am going to begin a new life."

That was my turning point. I vividly recognized that our Lord was speaking to me. I could see the pattern. It was rather scary. I couldn't share the excitement because no one would understand and so I turned to our Lord and shared it with Him. My name became alive and meaningful. The priest who baptized me, well, maybe he wasn't so wrong after all. My mother, who was watching all this from heaven would, I know, be smiling on it all.

A stylized graphic where the words "ONE LORD, FAITH, BAPTISM, GOD AND FATHER OF WHO IS ABOVE AND THROUGHOUT AND IN US ALL" are arranged to form the letters "ONE" and "ALL". The word "ONE" is on the left, and "ALL" is on the right. The text in between is stacked vertically. The letters "O", "N", and "E" of "ONE" are large and contain the words "LORD", "FAITH", and "BAPTISM" respectively. The letters "A", "L", and "L" of "ALL" are large and contain the words "GOD", "AND FATHER OF", and "WHO IS ABOVE" respectively. The words "AND THROUGHOUT" and "AND IN US" are smaller and positioned at the bottom of the graphic.

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## INTRODUCTION

I have been invited by National President, Heather Kolla, to share with you my life story and how our Lord has helped me to become more aware of how He has played His part in my life, from birth to the present. I invite you to take time to share your story with others by asking our Lord to help you become aware of the part He has played in your life story and to allow Him to direct its unfolding...

## MY LIFE STORY

Baptism has affected my life in a very special way. It began very dramatically on the day I was baptized when the priest insisted that he would not baptize me “Vivian” – it would have to be “Lydia,” which was to be my second name. Vivian was not a saint’s name and, therefore, not suitable. My mother told me she cried and cried because her wish to name me Vivian Lydia was not granted. I was baptized **Lydia** Vivian. My mother shared the story of my baptism only once, when I was very young. I never forgot the disappointment and hurt she expressed.

Approximately 30 years later, I participated in a bible study. We studied Acts 16 and the name Lydia came into the picture again. It read, “...and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”

I kept reading that passage over and over and reflecting on Paul’s writings and the Lord spoke to me through it. I began to appreciate my name, Lydia, a little more. Still, I never forgot my mother’s wish that I be baptized Vivian Lydia, which was never granted to her. I was still not too sure about the priest’s decision, right or wrong.

Approximately two years later, *The Role of Women in the Church* kit encouraged me to study women in biblical times. One of the books I read was *Her Name is Woman*. I have forgotten the author’s name. I began reading the stories of Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Miriam and, lo and behold, there was the story of Lydia.

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## WOMEN – ROOTED IN GOSPEL VALUES

### JOSEPHINE BAKHITA

“...Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. 5:10

#### **ABOUT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA**

Josephine Bakhita, beatified in May 1992, was born in Sudan, Africa in 1869 to a loving prosperous family. At the age of nine, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Her family consisted of three brothers and three sisters. She had a twin sister but never heard a word about her or her parents since the day she was kidnapped.

A series of owners humiliated, tortured and mutilated her. She tells her story of being dragged into a room full of tools and iron scraps. There was no bed—not even a sack for her to rest on—just the bare floor. She was to remain in that room for a whole month, in total darkness except for a tiny hole that was supposed to serve as a window. The door opened only once a day when a miserable handful of food was placed before her.

Although Bakhita had undergone much suffering, a final trial awaited her. At the age of 13 years, she underwent the excruciating ordeal of tattooing. It was hard for Josephine to express what she felt. She thought she would die, especially when salt was rubbed into the wounds. For more than a month she lay motionless, unable to move. It was by a miracle of God she did not die. He had destined her for better things.

In 1885, Bakhita was bought by an agent of the Italian Consul in Sudan. His wife, Signora Turina, was expecting a baby and Bakhita was to become the child’s nursemaid. Eventually, the child Mimmina was enrolled in a boarding school in Venice, run by the Daughters of Charity or the Canossian Sisters. Bakhita was expected to stay with Mimmina and, was therefore, instructed in the Christian faith. The saintly sisters helped her to know God, whom she had experienced by contemplating the sun, the moon,

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the stars, and all the things of nature. She often wondered who could be the master of it all and felt a deep desire to see Him, know Him, and pay Him homage. At last her desire was answered.

When Mimmina's mother came to take the two girls back to Africa where she and her husband settled, Bakhita decided she would stay with the sisters and complete her baptismal instructions. Had she gone back to Africa, she would not have had an opportunity to practice her new religion.



Signora was angry with Bakhita and begged her to come home with her, but Bakhita felt that the Lord wanted her for Himself alone. The superior of the Canossian Sisters assisted in Bakhita's staying at the convent and she was finally set free.

On December 7, 1893, she joined the novitiate and on December 8, 1896, she pronounced her religious vows. Sister Josephine lived to be 78, her life marked by persecution and simplicity.

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
is a national organization  
rooted in gospel values  
calling its members to holiness through  
service to the people of God**

This study program is an invitation to embark upon our Mission Statement; our life-long journey. This journey has been and will continue to be challenging. By praying this spiritual program on the Beatitudes, we will more readily see our life as a whole, sharing in God's vision of us. We will find new strength in times of trial. We will discover more meaning in our daily lives, and we will become more our true selves: more human in the pattern of Jesus, as Jesus laid out this pattern for us to follow. We will respond more readily with love for God, for our neighbour and for ourselves.

Each lesson on the Beatitudes is rooted in a passage from scripture, directing our attention to the values of the gospel as taught by Jesus Christ. Following each lesson is the story of the life of a saint.

When we, as members of the Catholic Women's League, become more aware of the part God has played in our life story, and when we become more willing to allow Him to direct its unfolding, this study program focused on the CWL Mission Statement will have achieved its goal.





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## CLOSING PRAYER

May we, the members of the Catholic Women's League, truly become women rooted in gospel values.

May we be a beacon on the hilltop to bring light to a nation in darkness.

May we be the salt of the earth to bring flavour to a nation which has lost its taste for justice and truth.

May we long to be poor in spirit, so we may truly abandon ourselves as Jesus did.

May we embrace our struggles and always pray to our Heavenly Father, "Not my will, but Yours be done," and so inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us daily, that we truly may become women of the Beatitudes, rooted in gospel values. May our daily witness be one of love, compassion, and mercy towards all those we meet. May we die to ourselves and so help to lead all people to Your son, Jesus Christ.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Composed by Gerry Yacishyn  
Member of Christ the King Parish Council  
Shaunavon, Saskatchewan  
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

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7. Confidentiality is very important in the sharing process. When confidentiality is honoured, each person will feel free to share honestly.
  8. Determine what action will be taken as a group effort or individually to live the meaning of the Beatitude until the next Beatitude is studied.
  9. At the next study session, share the action plan that was taken. As we know, lip service is not good enough – we must be ready to witness by putting our words into action.

*“Where two or three gather  
in my name,  
there I am in their midst”*





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## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY PROGRAM

(It is recommended that each member of the group have her own copy of *the Beatitudes* to use during the study session)

**When two or more Christians share their faith, we can be assured that Christ is in our midst and that the Holy Spirit is at work leading us, guiding us, inspiring us in a deeper understanding of our faith.**

This program is designed to foster spiritual growth among members by group sharing. For this program to be effective, you are encouraged to follow the guidelines listed below.

1. Each person in the group should be given the opportunity to share. The sharing is done at the level at which each person feels comfortable.
2. Each person, during the time of sharing, is given the opportunity to express feelings and thoughts as have been experienced in their life-long faith journey.
3. The leader of the group should be ready to listen closely to the person who is speaking, making sure that each person in the group gets an opportunity to share. The leader should make an honest effort not only to listen but to understand what the person really is trying to say. A sense of humour is always helpful but be sure to use it at the right time.
4. The leader must ask questions only when necessary to keep the discussion in focus and then do her sharing last. The leader should not attempt to problem-solve.
5. The group is encouraged to share a second time only after the entire group has shared once.
6. Silence is very important in this group setting in order to respect each person in the group. In silence, one is able to reflect and meditate on the readings, maintaining the focus on the Beatitude studied.





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*Come, kindle in our hearts,  
the fire of your love.*



**A Study Program**

**the**  
**Beatitudes**

**Rooted in Gospel Values**

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1993  
Revised 2004

