

Beatitudes and Beads

Rosary Meditations on Blessedness

PHILIP NERI POWELL, OP



Liguori

ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI MO 63057-9999

Imprimi Potest: Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.
Provincial, Denver Province, The Redemptorists

Published by Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 63057, USA
To order, call 800-325-9521, or visit Liguori.org.

© 2010 Philip Neri Powell, OP

ISBN 978-0-7648-1966-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

The material in this pamphlet is adapted from a chapter in *Treasures Holy and Mystical: A Devotional Journey for Today's Catholics* (Liguori Publications 2010), © 2010 Philip Neri Powell, OP.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible with Revised New Testament and Revised Psalms* © 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of the Redemptorists (redemptorists.com).

Printed in the United States of America

14 13 12 11 10 5 4 3 2 1

Introduction

Praying this rosary and meditating on the mysteries of blessedness will bring you closer to the heart of Christ's teaching found in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5—7). Jesus teaches that we find his happiness through humility, repentance, and charity.

When we are persecuted for preaching his Word, we are to rely solely on the grace of his Holy Spirit to give us the words for making peace. When we confront our own pride, obstinacy, and apathy, we are bound in obedience to repent and seek reconciliation. Our happiness in Christ is not assured because we're right or powerful or feared. We inherit the kingdom when we face insult, persecution, and lies with gladness, charity, and mercy.

The following prayer is designed for a ten-decade rosary. To pray it with a five-decade rosary, use each set of ten beads twice or pray five decades on alternating days.

Crucifix: *Sign of the Cross* (+)

Beatitude Promise (TOGETHER)

Poor in spirit, we weep for our sins and rejoice in Christ's comfort; we hunger and thirst for his righteousness and submit ourselves to his teaching. Longing to be merciful and pure of heart, we strive to be peacemakers for his sake even in the midst of persecution. Amen.

Leader: Lord Jesus, gathering your faithful disciples around you, you taught them the Way of Blessedness, our path to happiness here on earth and in the life to come. Hear us as we follow your Way in prayer and bless us with all the gifts we need to enjoy the beauty made manifest in your Blessed Mother. Lead us to your Sacred Heart, where our eyes will see and our ears will hear. Amen.

(Bead 1, together) Our Father...

(Beads 2, 3, and 4, together) Mother Mary, Blessed of God, bearer of the Word made flesh, from your virgin womb came Christ Jesus, the Lord, our way to heavenly peace. Be with us now and when we stray. Amen.

(Bead 5, leader) Happy are those who follow the path of humility and hope. Happy are those who carry the cross of Christ for his sake. Happy are we who pray for his gift of peace.



FIRST DECADE

Blessedness

Leader: From his abundant goodness, the Lord provides all we need for our happiness.

Meditation

The perfectly lived Christian life is a life of happiness and peace. We might think this means that no Christian will ever suffer from sadness or bouts of turmoil. Not so. The happiness Christ promises to his followers is not a placid serenity or the unmovable calm of a Zen Buddhist monk sitting in meditation.

Rather, Christian happiness is the peace we feel when we know the path we follow leads to the perfection of our purpose as lovers of God. Happiness now depends entirely on our trust in the happiness to come in heaven.

Practically speaking, this means that any sadness we feel, any turmoil we experience, pales beside the grand drama of our eternal lives in God

in heaven. Christ and his Church are the rock from which we venture out into the world. Securely anchored to the faith of the Body, we can be at perfect peace knowing that nothing on this earth can come between God and his people. The Sermon on the Mount teaches us exactly what this peace entails and how we not only maintain our hold on God but strengthen that hold as well.

Each beatitude gives us an attitude to adopt and a course of action to take. Faithfully followed, they will bring us closer and closer to the ideal of the perfect Christian life. Thanks be to God that we do not tread the Way of Christ alone! God's treasury of grace is inexhaustible, boundless, and given to us without condition. Though freely given, we must receive these graces to put them to work.

To receive God's gifts, we have only to dispose our hearts and minds to believe and practice the virtues contained in the beatitudes. The exercise of graced virtue builds spiritual muscle and makes the journey to Christ's perfection less strenuous on the soul and more likely to succeed. However, if the journey is taken alone—without family, friends,

neighbors, the Church—the stress of carrying the cross will end in defeat.

In all the beatitudes, Jesus clearly indicates that it is the Church being Christ together that is blessed with the kingdom and the earth as their inheritance.

(Ten beads, together) Mother Mary... (page 4)

Beatitude Promise (TOGETHER) (page 4)

SECOND DECADE

Blessedness of a poor spirit

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

Meditation

A common feature of murder-mystery novels is the presumptuous heir, the child or wife or brother who presumes he or she is the heir to the murdered millionaire's fortune. Suspicious minds begin to calculate the ways in which the puffed-up fortune-seeker might have helped their benefactor into the afterlife before his time. The detective-hero often pesters the heir until a better suspect comes along.

In the meantime, most everyone seems content to assume that the one with the most to gain by the death of the millionaire is the one who killed him. With this assumption goes all the gossip, taunts, and derision those left out of the will can muster.

The presumptive heir would be better served by being poor in spirit and assuming nothing about the

inheritance. Jesus teaches those gathered that the kingdom of God falls to those who live in worship and awe of the Father, not in prideful spite or the audacious pursuit of worldly kingdoms.

The poor spirit is not bereft of fire or lacking in zeal. Jesus isn't telling us to take on the spirit of a whipped stray found in a dumpster. The spiritual poverty we seek is the humility found in the one who knows that his very life is totally dependent on the love of God.

A humble Christian remembers she is made from the dirt of the earth and given life by the breath of the Creator. Without the loving will of God to bring us up from the ash, we would not be. And absent God's love for us after our creation, we would cease to be.

Knowing this truth, living in the knowledge of our origins and what we would be without divine love, we should nourish a rich sense of humility and uproot any opposing audacity that threatens to choke out God's light. Yes, we are heirs to the kingdom if we are poor in spirit. But this isn't a cause for prideful boasting. Quite the opposite—