

Vocation of the Baptized and the Beatitudes

Some Reflections for Catholic Educators

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Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love

Catholic Character Themes: Discipleship, Reverence

Our Vocation as Members of the Baptized:

- **To announce the Gospel of Jesus (Evangelization)**
through our lives, in our work. In this way, the Gospel can *salt* our culture with its flavour, raise (like *yeast*) its values to a truly human level, and illuminate society's understanding of what is good and true and just for all people.
- **Witness to Gospel values rooted in the Beatitudes:**
 - ***poor in spirit (theirs is the kingdom of heaven)***
the poor in spirit know their lives are in God's hands, and use what God has given them for what is good, right, just and true.
 - ***those who mourn (they shall be comforted)***
the pain of mourning cuts to the heart and is often inconsolable. God is there for us, to be our consolation in our deeply felt losses. To stand in solidarity with those who mourn is to bring them the consolation of God.
 - ***the meek (they will inherit the earth)***
God has a preferential option for those who cannot or do not defend themselves in the cause of what is right. Just as the Father raised Jesus from the dead, God will raise up the meek, and they will be a sign of God's compassionate love.
 - ***those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (they shall be filled)***
To be righteous (*dikaiousune* in Greek) is to be in *right relationship* with God and neighbour. The thirst for true righteousness changes lives. Hearts emptied of self-centredness can and will be filled by a never-ending well of love for God and neighbour. This love will always bear fruit.
 - ***the merciful (they will receive mercy)***
God's love is expressed using the Hebrew word ***hesed***, meaning loving-kindness. *Hesed* is expressed as mercy and compassion. God's heart is a merciful heart; to be merciful is to be truly human as image of God. Mercy is the hallmark of God's Kingdom.
 - ***the pure in heart (they shall see God)***
The *heart*, in biblical understanding is that place where the mind, the will, the spirit and emotions come together. The pure of heart (also expressed as single-hearted) know that only God can satisfy their deepest longings, and so, they orient their entire lives toward love of God and neighbour; God Himself will be their reward. All peoples are called to this single-hearted love.
 - ***the peacemakers (they will be called children of God)***
There can be no peace without the justice of *right relationship* with God and neighbour. Those who empty themselves of greed to foster a just sharing of God's gifts reflect the divine image as God's true children, mirroring the Trinity's self-giving communion of love.
 - ***persecuted for righteousness' sake (theirs is the kingdom of heaven)***
A true love of God goes hand-in-hand with love of neighbour. The kingdom of heaven is alive and flourishing in righteous hearts. Those who like Jesus are persecuted for righteousness' sake will share in his reward: the fullness of the Kingdom.
 - ***the reviled, persecuted and slandered on Christ's account (great is their reward)***
A Gospel-led life stands as a prophetic witness that challenges people and institutional structures which undermine human dignity and the common good. This is the way of Jesus and the prophets, and it can bring persecution and suffering, but always a deep sense of peace. Those who strive to live prophetically as Christians will share in Christ's reward.