

My Father's House

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Embracing the Cross Our Way to Holiness

Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA
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St. Paul urges us in that tremendous ode to humility:

Though he was in the form of God,
Jesus did not deem equality with God
Something to be grasped at,

- 1) Rather, he emptied himself
- 2) And took the form of a slave,
- 3) Being born in the likeness of men.
- 4) He was known to be of human estate,
- 5) And it was thus that he humbled himself,
- 6) Obediently accepting even death,
- 7) Death on a cross.

HUMILIATION

Because of this,

- 1) God highly exalted him
- 2) And bestowed on him the name
- 3) Above every other name,
- 4) So that at Jesus' name
- 5) Every knee must bend
- 6) In the heavens, on the earth
and under the earth
- 7) And every tongue proclaim
To the glory of God the Father:
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!

EXALTATION

A Tremendous Secret

Jesus gives us here a tremendous secret into the spiritual life. Since God's ways are not man's ways, we must die to the one to embrace the other. To go up, we must first go down.

The Story of Two Mountains

There is a close relationship between two mountains mentioned in Scripture that is similar to the relationship found between the first and second acts of a two-act drama. For Jesus, who climbed the Mount of Beatitudes to preach the Sermon on the Mount, also had to climb the Mount of Calvary to fully practice what He preached.

The Sermon on the Mount always includes crucifixion. Anyone who puts the beatitudes into practice must both die to self and be crucified by the world. Humility, meekness, purity of heart, love and forgiveness always involve a death to the self.

The day that Jesus taught the Beatitudes, He signed his own death warrant. For He realized that one way to make enemies and to challenge the spirit of the world was to come against it. The world has a spirit as each age has a spirit. There are certain unanalyzed assumptions which govern the conduct of our world in general and our country in particular. Anyone who challenges these worldly maxims, such as "You live only once," "Get as much out of life as you can," "Who will ever know about it?" "What is sex for if not for pleasure?" is bound to make himself unpopular. For in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord speaks strongly against *riches, revenge, worldly laughter, getting even, popularity, unbridled sex, armed might, and soft comfort*. He turned them upside down.

To those who say, "You cannot be happy unless you are rich," Jesus said, "Woe to the rich and blessed are the poor in spirit."

To those who say, "Don't let them get away with it," Jesus taught, "Blessed are the meek."

To those who say, "Laugh and the world laughs with you," Jesus said, "Blessed are they who mourn."

To those who say, "If nature gave you sex instincts, you ought to give them free expression otherwise you will become frustrated," Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure of heart."

To those who say, "Seek to be popular and well known," Jesus said, "Blessed are you who men revile and persecute and speak all manner of evil against you falsely because of me."

To those who say, "In time of peace, prepare for war," and "We support our troops," Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Jesus scorns the cliches around which headlines, movies and novels are written. He proposes to burn what the world worships, to conquer errant sex instincts instead of allowing them to make slaves of men and women, and to tame economic conquests instead of making happiness consist of an abundance of things external to the soul. Jesus scorns all false beatitudes which make happiness depend upon self-expression, license, or having a good time – the "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die" philosophy – because they will not bring us perfect peace, true love or real happiness. Instead, He warns that they will bring mental disorders, unhappiness, false hopes, fears and anxieties.