

Daily Homily
St. Peter Claver; priest
Memorial
Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time, Wednesday
9 September 2020
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Luke goes to the core and to the foundation.

Today we hear the mighty Beatitudes. There are two versions in the Gospels – the one we just heard from Luke and the other is in Matthew’s Gospel. While similar, there is quite a contrast.

Luke is more direct and to the point: “Blessed are you who are poor.” Matthew softens his: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Why is this? Why this difference in tone?

It is said that Luke’s audience, his community tends to be more affluent. Luke not only has to name the grace in his community. He not only can offer words that affirm and confirm their faithful discipleship, but he also has to help them see their sin. He has to name where they are putting up roadblocks and obstacles to their discipleship.

His community, it would seem, is too reliant on wealth. Remember, Luke is direct. He is not talking about being “poor in spirit.” Luke just says it, “Blessed are you poor.” For a wealthy, affluent individual to hear these words about being poor, hungry, weeping, and hated is to offer another way, an ulterior life. A life not addicted to money, gain, power, prestige, or status. This is not a life that can be found following Christ. Luke is offering to his community through these Beatitudes a healthy dose of compunction.

Compunction, what a great word. It means to puncture, to deflate especially when it comes to the ego, especially when it comes to our own self-concern. If it is anything that Luke’s Beatitudes do, with what they bless and what they woe, they do fill us with a sense of compunction.

So what is your grace? How well are you doing in following the Lord in your life today? What is your sin? Where does your ego – the need for more or the need to be liked or the need for positivity – need to be cast aside so that being poor, hungry, weepy, and hated can teach the wisdom of God?