

Session 3: Those Who Mourn and the Meek

What We Found

Mourning and meekness travel as a pair, both rooted in the *anawim* texts. Blessed mourning has three circles (the dead, our sin, the world's evil), and Jesus wept at a tomb he was about to empty: hope accompanies grief rather than canceling it. We discovered that Matthew 5:5 quotes Psalm 37:11 nearly verbatim, and we let Moses (Numbers 12:3) and Jesus (Matthew 11:29) define meekness: strength under governance, power that declines to avenge itself, never submission to abuse. The promised Comforter shares his name with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Voices of the Church

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA · HOMILIES ON THE BEATITUDES

St. Gregory of Nyssa teaches, in substance, that the mourning Christ blesses is not every sadness but grief awake to what we have lost: made for communion with God, we have fallen from it, and the soul that feels that distance and weeps for it is already turning home. Such mourning is the opposite of despair. (Our image for it, not his: such grief is homesickness, and homesickness points toward a home.)

Application (ours, not the saint's): the next steps of the ascent: the hand that let go (Session 2) now feels what it lost, and grief bends the will soft enough to be governed.

ST. AUGUSTINE · CONFESSIONS, BOOK IX

When his mother, St. Monica, died at Ostia, St. Augustine recounts in Book IX of the Confessions that he restrained his tears, judging loud grief unfitting for a death so full of hope, until at last he stopped fighting and wept freely for the mother who had wept so many years for him, and he found in those tears not faithlessness but rest.

Application (ours, not the saint's): Christian hope does not cancel grief; it holds it. The room should hear clearly that tears at a graveside are not a failure of faith. Jesus wept at one.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES · INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE

St. Francis de Sales, the Church's great doctor of gentleness, teaches in substance that meekness must govern us not only toward our neighbor but toward ourselves: after a fault, correct your heart calmly and without bitter self-directed anger, for harshness toward oneself is still harshness, and a heart bullied into virtue does not stay there. Gentleness, he insists, gains more than vehemence ever will.

Application (ours): as a young priest, de Sales evangelized the hostile Chablais region through patient preaching and pamphlets rather than personal violence (the region's politics were another, rougher matter); his meekness had a spine.

Live It This Week

- Memorize Matthew 5:4-5; recite 5:3-5 together each morning.
- Comfort one afflicted person this week: a text to the grieving, a visit, a Mass offered. Comforting the afflicted is a spiritual work of mercy; do it on purpose.

- When provoked this week, delay your response by ten seconds and hand the outcome to God before you speak.
- Read Matthew 5:6 before Session 4, and come hungry.

Memory Verse · Matthew 5:4-5

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Catechism References

CCC 1716-1717, 2447; see also 736 on the fruits of the Spirit

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 5:6 before Session 4, and come hungry.