

## **SEPTEMBER REFLECTION 2023**

***Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

**Invocation** (Make the sign of the cross as the leader prays the invocation.)

Leader: + Blessed are the poor in spirit,

**All: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**All: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Psalm 23:1-6 (pray antiphonally)**

***The LORD is my shepherd;***

***there is nothing I lack.***

***In green pastures he makes me lie down;***

***to still waters he leads me;***

***he restores my soul.***

***He guides me along right paths***

***for the sake of his name.***

***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,***

***I will fear no evil, for you are with me;***

***your rod and your staff comfort me.***

***You set a table before me***

***in front of my enemies;***

***You anoint my head with oil;***

***my cup overflows.***

***Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me***

***all the days of my life;***

***I will dwell in the house of the LORD***

***for endless days.***

**Scripture** *Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." After he placed his hands on them, he went away.*

Matthew 19:13-15

**(Pause for a few moments to meditate on the reading.)**

**Reflection** *The "poor in spirit" are those who cast themselves on God's grace. We personally acknowledge our spiritual bankruptcy before God. Thus, at the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, we learn that we don't have the spiritual resources in ourselves to put Jesus' teachings into practice. We can't fulfill God's call by ourselves. Blessed are those who realize they are spiritually bankrupt, for this realization turns them to God, without whom they cannot fulfill what they are created to do and be. Much of the rest of the sermon rips away from us the self-delusion that we are capable of acquiring a state of blessedness on our own. It aims to produce in us a genuine poverty of spirit.*

*What is the practical result of this blessing? If we are poor in spirit, we are able to bring an honest appraisal of ourselves to our work. We don't inflate our résumé or boast about our position. We know how difficult it is to work with people who cannot learn, grow, or accept correction because they are trying to maintain an inflated picture of themselves. So we commit ourselves to honesty about ourselves. We remember that even Jesus, when he started working with wood, must have needed guidance and instruction. At the same time, we acknowledge that only with God at work within us can we put Jesus' teachings into practice on the job. We seek God's presence and strength in our lives each day as we live as Christians where we work.*

**Prayer**

***God of the prophets,***

***God of Christ:***

***we are reminded today***

***that your blessings do not necessarily follow the logic of the world.***

***The world believes that the rich are blessed,***

***but Jesus reminds us that it is the poor who are blessed,***

***the poor in spirit and the materially poor as well.***

***We pray for a more just world***

***In which all have enough and none are left behind***

**Sign of the Cross**

***Let Us Build  
the Kingdom of God***

