

Beatitudes for a modern day

Family “attitudes of being” that make this nation great

By John D. Alexander, S.J.

These beatitudes are really a summary of what I've learned down through the years. So I pass them on for what they're worth before the bell tolls.

- Blessed are those who “recognize their need for God,” who acknowledge their dependence on God and His gifts to them.
- Blessed are those who though they are blessed with fine families and friends are still very concerned with the pain and suffering of others, either nearby or at a distance. These others are their human brothers and sisters.
- Blessed are the generous people who give of their love, their time, their money, and somehow keep on giving despite disillusionment and disappointment in seeing their efforts go wasted.
- Blessed are the “big people” who can forgive those who are petty, angry, rude, or neurotic, and seek to find and delight in the good qualities of the people around them.
- Blessed are those who respect a person as an individual and do not prejudge him or her because of race, color, ethnic, or economic background or sexual identity. They do not, therefore, reduce that individual's many good qualities to one rather unessential characteristic.
- Blessed are the single persons who somehow can hack this life alone.
- Blessed is the partner in marriage whose love affirms his or her partner with patience, understanding, and especially, forgiveness, helping that partner to keep growing in every way.
- Blessed are the parents who love and respect their children as individuals. They realize that, regardless of what their children are taught and how they are disciplined, they will learn especially by imitation of them.
- Blessed are the parents of teenagers who can really listen and give them time in casual, low-keyed situations, and who take time to explain and discuss quietly their reasons for certain actions.
- Blessed are the children and teenagers who respect their parents, who try not to inflict their growing pains upon the ones who love them the most, and who contribute to the family with their time and communication.

- Blessed are the peacemakers who before a rift in a family is frozen like ice and divides a family for years, go out of their way to settle disputes, heal the bruised egos, and restore peace.
- Blessed are those who mourn the loss of a loved one and who, because of their hope in Christ, work through this pain and anger without becoming depressed or bitter.
- Blessed are those who befriend the divorced and separated and give them time, understanding, and support during this period of self-doubt and loneliness.
- Blessed are those who do not resent the poor or the homeless.
- Blessed are those who befriend the handicapped and appreciate the people in their lives who teach them that no situation is hopeless and that they should use all the talents they have.
- Blessed are those heroic Christians who can forgive muggers and who can even forgive the murderers of their children. Their love is closest to Christ on the cross.
- Blessed are Archbishop Romero, the four American women, the six Jesuits, their cook and her daughter who were all martyred in El Salvador for trying to help the poor for justice's sake. The kingdom of God is theirs.
- Blessed are those people in Eastern Europe who never let the spirit of freedom die and who worshipped quietly while at great risk.
- Blessed are those men and women who in the September of their lives still wonder how they can serve God and others better. In their cheerful acceptance of pain and inconvenience, they give witness to a strong belief in a loving God.
- Blessed are those who like Christ are facing what seems like a senseless death with so many jobs to be done and people to take care of. This trust in the face of death is their last compliment to a loving and caring Father who waits to reward them.
- Finally, blessed are those people who are most sensitive to pain and injustice around them. They help us to keep our vision clear. By this example they help us to be patient, loving, and forgiving. They inspire us to keep putting one foot in front of the other in our attempts to walk the path of Christ in following the ideals of these beatitudes.
- As a postscript, less serious but still important: Blessed are those selfless people who throw parties that get families and friends together.

John D. Alexander, S.J., was former Headmaster of Brooklyn Prep High School, N.Y., and Moderator of the Brooklyn Prep Alumni Association. He resides on the campus of Fordham University.