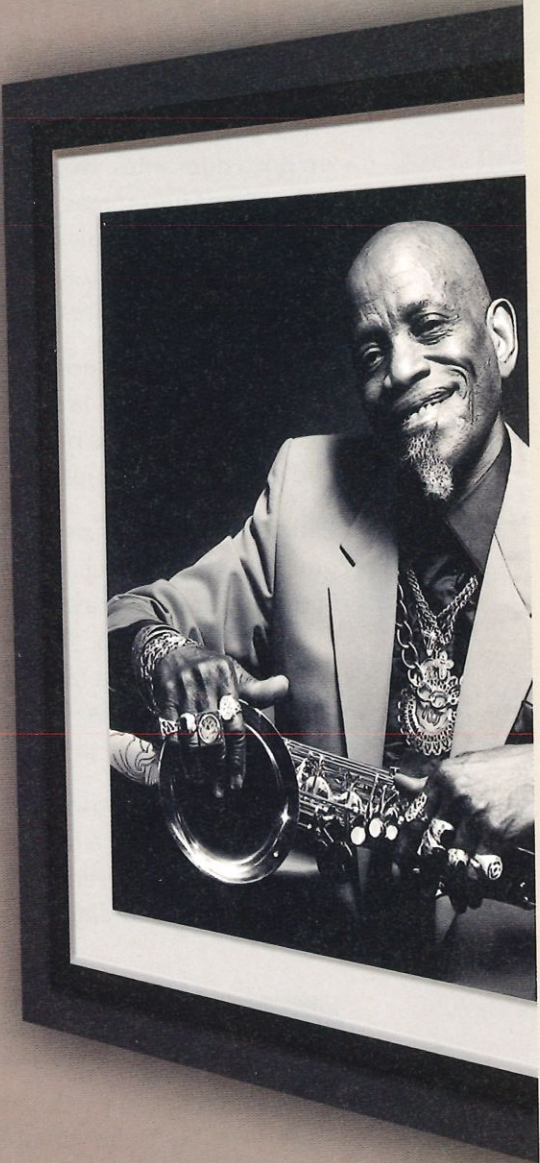


Confirmed in love



How many choices do you make each day? How often do you make a really important choice? Where do you turn for help in making those important choices?

"[P]our out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers." —*Morning Prayer, Pentecost Mass*

Understanding Scripture

Jesus tells us that when we are faced with a difficult choice, we can find help in the **Beatitudes** and the **Ten Commandments**. The Beatitudes begin the Sermon on the Mount, the first of five teaching sections in Matthew's Gospel. In this sermon, Jesus gives his new interpretation of many of the laws in the five books of the Torah, which were given to the people by Moses. Jesus calls his followers to a new way of living that moves beyond the Ten Commandments, the core of the law.

With the Beatitudes, Jesus is offering us a new way of life. If we live according to the Beatitudes, we will begin to experience the Kingdom of God.

Scripture and You

Making moral decisions is never easy. The Ten Commandments give us directions—"Keep the Lord's day holy," "Do not kill," "Do not steal," and others. The Beatitudes are a bit different. They are not so much a description of what we should do; rather, they are examples of whom we should be, not just as individuals, but as members of a community for whom the Kingdom of God is both a promise and a present reality.

God wants us to be happy, and following the Beatitudes will help us find happiness. God made us with the desire for happiness so that we would be drawn to him, the one who can make us completely happy.

Each beatitude begins with the Greek word *makarios*, which can be translated as "happy." However, because the Beatitudes are about the happiness that comes from drawing nearer to the Kingdom of God, "blessed" is the best translation. The happiness we are called to cannot be found in riches, fame, or any human achievement; it can only come from trusting God.

The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount describe the path that leads to true happiness. Sustained by the Holy Spirit, we walk that path, step by step, in our everyday actions.

REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

Relax your body and calm your mind. Think about times you have found it difficult to do what you know you should do. Think about Jesus' words of blessing in the Beatitudes. Ask him for help in your difficult times.

The Beatitudes

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

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called
children of God.

Blessed are they who are
persecuted for the sake of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom
of heaven.

Matthew 5:3–10



Called to Be Free

God created us to be free, and we can only be truly happy if we are free. It is within our power to choose to do or not do what is good. Our freedom means that we take responsibility for our actions. The more we choose to do what is good, the freer we become. But choosing to be happy, choosing to be free, is not always easy. Furthermore, the right choice is not always clear.

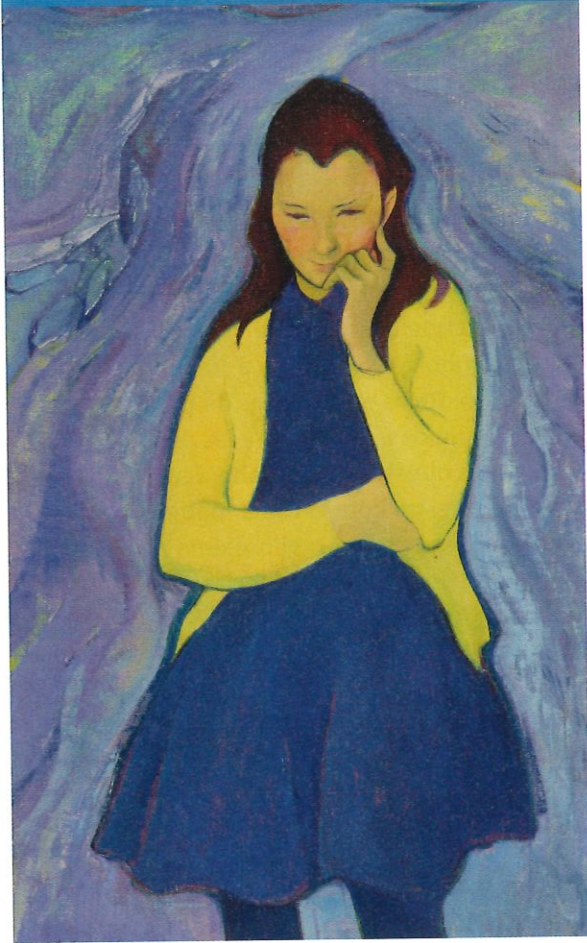
There are three requirements for any choice to be a good one. First, what you want to do must be good. Helping a friend, cleaning up around the yard, visiting a sick neighbor—these are all good actions. Second, your intention must be good as well. Doing a chore for a neighbor to avoid babysitting your sister is not an example of choosing good. When the reason why you want to do something is not good, even a kind act is not the right decision.

Finally, the circumstances of the choice must be considered. For example, you promised your parents that you would come straight home after school, but on the way home, your friend twisted his ankle. You walked with him to make sure he got home safely, and you were late arriving home as a result. The circumstances made your decision more difficult. You were called to make a much more mature decision, taking into account the needs of your neighbor. It is not always easy to choose according to your conscience, but that is what growing as a Christian is about.

Conscience: Where We Hear God Speak

How do we know what is a good choice? How do we know our intentions are good? Deep within us is a voice that helps us know right from wrong and then act on that knowledge.

ART LINK



Margaret, Irish Girl, Antonio Ciccone, 1967.

Joven irlandesa, Antonio Ciccone, 1967.



decisions



When we take time to put aside distractions and look inside ourselves, we find our **conscience**. Because we are made in the image of God and are drawn to him, our conscience naturally directs us toward choosing good and avoiding evil.

We can be tempted to choose against our conscience because of Original Sin. The formation of our conscience is a lifelong task. It begins in our family and continues through following the teachings of the Church, the friendships we build, and the choices we make. It is our responsibility to continue to form our conscience as we grow. As you will see in the next chapter, the virtues and Gifts of the Holy Spirit will help us do this.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Does the way you behave let people know you are a Catholic? Read the situations and consider whether you ever act in these ways.

- Let someone else be the center of attention.
- Go out of your way to make a new person feel comfortable and welcomed.

- Volunteer even when none of your friends do.
- Avoid spreading rumors.
- Sacrifice your free time to visit someone who is sick.
- Admit when you have done something wrong and apologize.

You know what influence a famous musician, a movie star, or a sports hero can have on your life. You might adopt their style of clothing, their likes and dislikes, and maybe even copy their walk, gestures, or expressions. Jesus Christ is our greatest role model and guide for our lives. He instructed us to keep the Ten Commandments. When asked what was the greatest commandment, he responded: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:30–31) At another time he said: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (John 13:34)

MY TURN Right and Wrong

For each bad decision, write a good decision that could be made instead.

1. Erica is shopping with her grandmother when she realizes she is running late for soccer practice. Without telling her grandmother, Erica leaves the store.

2. Nick forgets to do his homework, so he tells the teacher that his little brother tore it up.

Christian Love

Loving like Jesus means making room in our hearts for all people—our families, our friends, our parish community, our brothers and sisters in other countries, even people we don't especially like. We can do this by showing the warmth, love,

and acceptance of Jesus Christ to those who are poor, sick, strangers, even those who have hurt us. Jesus appreciated the response of love he found in people. He praised positive attitudes, generosity, and service.

MY TURN Responses of Love

The Gospels tell of Jesus' love. Jesus knew that actions speak louder than words, so he practiced what he preached. His love was so powerful that it inspired others to show love. Read each Gospel verse below. Then underline the correct response of love.

1. Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke 10:38–42)
kindness listening service
2. Martha (Luke 10:38–42)
serving healing listening
3. The centurion (Luke 7:1–10)
teaching faith patience
4. Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Luke 19:1–10)
listening repentance mercy
5. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37)
mercy faith humility
6. The ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19)
generosity preaching expressing thanks
7. Andrew (John 1:40–42)
joy singing leading a friend to Jesus
8. Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57–60)
preaching patience sharing possessions
9. The women who followed Jesus (Luke 8:1–3)
hospitality patience trust
10. The man who was blind and begging by the roadside (Luke 18:35–43)
generosity teaching faith



Christ in the House of Martha and Mary,
Jan Vermeer, 1654–1656.

Cristo en la casa de Marta y María,
Jan Vermeer, 1654–1656.

Through the Gospels, we learn that Jesus wants us to love and care for others. It is also just as important that we take care of ourselves. Eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep are essential. We must also remember not to put ourselves down or get caught up in negative thoughts. Life is a gift from God, and when we treat ourselves and one another with respect, we show our love for God.

Christian Service

At Baptism we received the grace that enables us to love and serve others without counting the cost, to see Christ in others, and to avoid hurting others. Grace makes us eager to reach out to others with concern. It leads us to use our gifts and talents to meet others' needs. Confirmation strengthens the love within us.



We show we have loving hearts when we perform works of mercy. As members of the Christian community, we are actively concerned about those who do not have enough clothing, food, or a good home. We meet their physical needs through the **Corporal Works of Mercy**. These works include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to those who are poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity. It is also a work of justice, pleasing to God.

rite



Rite

The bishop extends his two hands over all the confirmands. The laying on of hands reflects what the first Apostles did to baptize others in the Holy Spirit.

Meaning

The bishop, with his hands extended, asks God to impart on the confirmands the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Daily Life

The Holy Spirit works through us and guides us to do the right thing. When we use the gift of our hands to help and care for others, we are honoring the Spirit within us.

Life of Faith

When we extend our hand in a sign of peace, we remember that together we are members of the one Body of Christ, the Church. The Works of Mercy are a guide to how we can serve the Church by helping others.

We also want to help those who are feeling hurt, discouraged, sick, or confused. We meet the emotional and spiritual needs of people through the **Spiritual Works of Mercy**. These works are instructing, admonishing, counseling, comforting, forgiving, bearing wrongs patiently, and praying for others. The Spirit helps us know what to do in order to come to the aid of our neighbor.

One way to love and serve others through the Works of Mercy is to protect people's basic rights. Everyone has the right to food, clothing, shelter, and fair wages. Everyone has the right to life and freedom. Sometimes we work for justice by giving people what they need. Sometimes justice means speaking up for people, teaching them, and standing up for them. Justice is a matter of love.

Your attitude toward service can teach people how to have a heart for others. Is your attitude toward service positive? Do you look for ways to serve others? Do you consider it a privilege to serve? Followers of Jesus who believe that he loves them will show the same love to others.



When we reach out to others in service with the joy and strength of the Holy Spirit, we find we are the ones who really receive. We receive Christ, who lives in the people we serve.

MY TURN Work of Mercy

Think of an example of Jesus performing a Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy. Write it and tell which Work of Mercy it exemplifies. Then write how you can reach out to others in service.



Practicing Christian Service

As Christians, we are called to serve others. Think about how you can volunteer your time and talent for the good of the community. Keep a record of the service you do during your time of preparation for Confirmation. Write about it in your journal regularly. After you have reached out to others in Christian service, reflect on your experience. Remember, you may be asked to share what you have written in your journal, but it will not be turned in, and no one else will read it. You might complete the following statements in your journal:

- I showed Christian love and service by . . .
- I chose to do this because . . .
- By doing this service, I learned that Christian service means . . .
- Doing this service helped me . . .
- Two important events that happened to me while doing this project were . . .
- This experience will help me later in life because it taught me . . .
- I can follow up on this experience by . . .

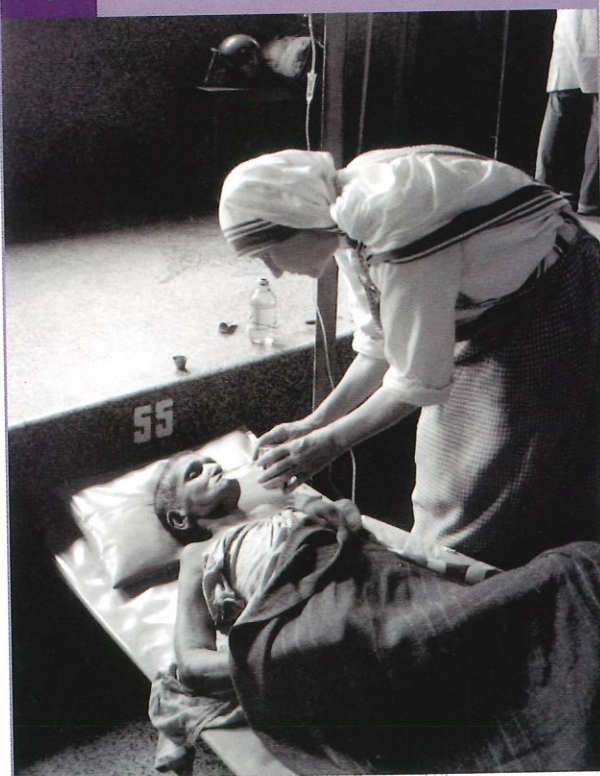


Tending the thirsty, anonymous, 14th century.

Atendiendo a los sedientos, anónimo, siglo XIV.

1

WITNESS



Tireless Servant: Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta expressed her love for God by working to serve and help those who were less fortunate. She became a nun at age 18 and was then sent to Calcutta, India. When she was 36 years old, she felt a “call within a call.” She wanted to help those who were poor and sick and live among them. Sister Teresa decided to dedicate her life to serving the poor and sick, so she moved into the slums of Calcutta. By 1948 she had founded her own order, the Society of the Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa established a hospice in Calcutta for those who were destitute and dying. In 1957 the Missionaries of Charity started their work with lepers and the poor in many disaster areas of the world. Mother Teresa received several awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize. She continued to work in Calcutta until her death in 1997. Mother Teresa was beatified in 2003. Her feast day is September 5.

2 ACT

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Just as the Holy Spirit called Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, the Spirit of the Lord has been sent to us and calls us to have a special concern for those who are poor. The Kingdom of God is served when we work to assure justice for the poor, release of the oppressed, consolation for the sorrowful, and a new social order in which significant steps are taken so that the needs of people who are poor are addressed. When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in truth, we will be able to see Christ in our neighbors who suffer most. We are called to see that Jesus' concern for those in need is consistently reflected in our liturgical celebrations.

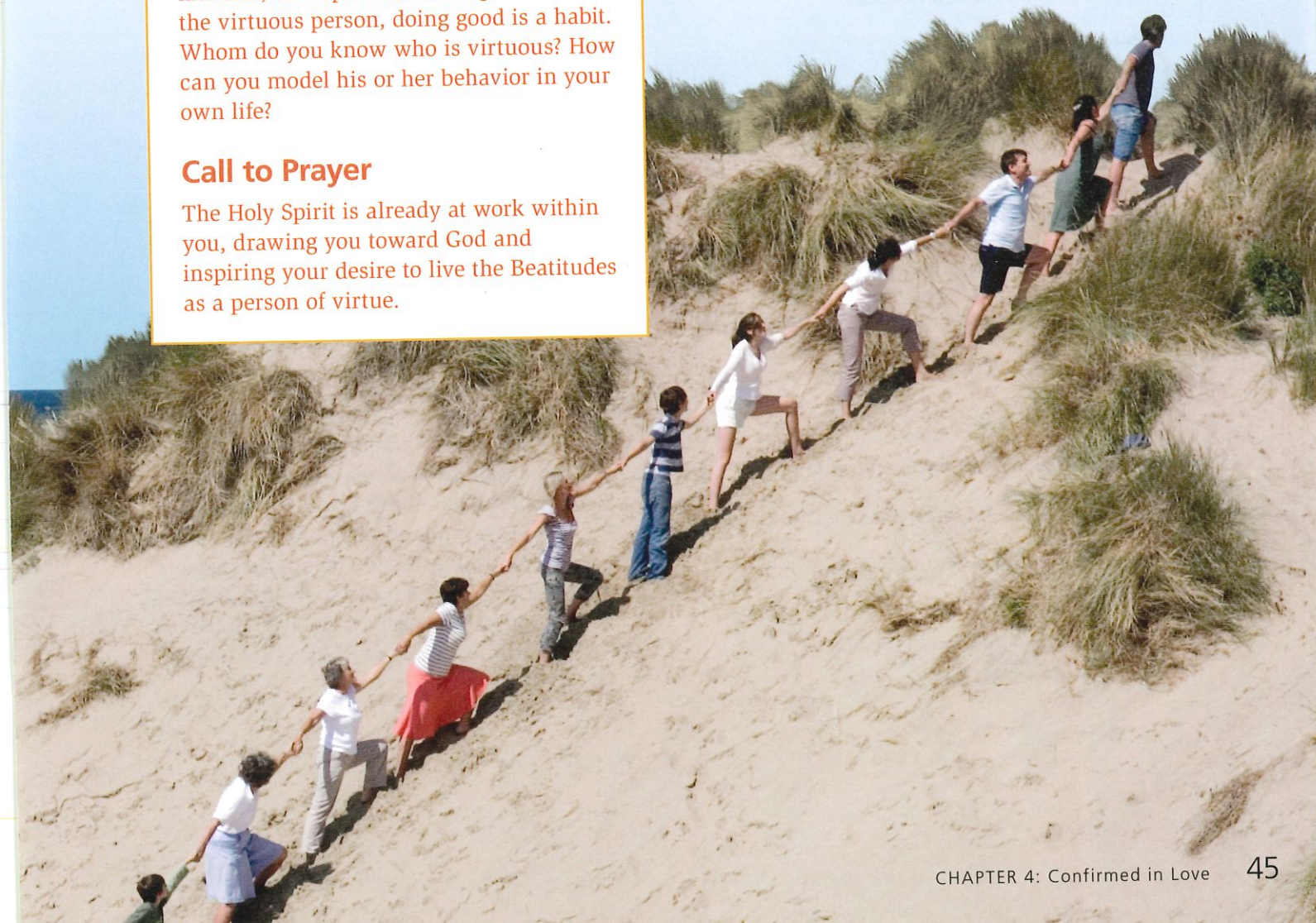
3 PRAY

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes challenge us to be people of **virtue**. Virtue is a firm attitude, mindset, or disposition to do good. For the virtuous person, doing good is a habit. Whom do you know who is virtuous? How can you model his or her behavior in your own life?

Call to Prayer

The Holy Spirit is already at work within you, drawing you toward God and inspiring your desire to live the Beatitudes as a person of virtue.



pray

Showing Love

All: In the name of the Father, and
of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Leader: Gathered as a community of believers,
let us listen to God, speaking to us in
his Word today and always.

Leader: Blessed are the poor in spirit,

All: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Leader: Blessed are they who mourn,

All: for they will be comforted.

Leader: Blessed are the meek,

All: for they will inherit the land.

Leader: Blessed are they who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,

All: for they will be satisfied.

Leader: Blessed are the merciful,

All: for they will be shown mercy.

Leader: Blessed are the clean of heart,

All: for they will see God.

Leader: Blessed are the peacemakers,

All: for they will be called children of God.

Leader: Blessed are they who are persecuted
for the sake of righteousness,

All: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3–10

Leader: In our preparation for the Sacrament
of Confirmation, we learn how our
actions demonstrate our love for God.
Sometimes we stray from God's love
and commit sins. When we recognize
our wrongs, we ask for forgiveness.
The Beatitudes guide us in the ways we
should live.

All: O my God, I love you above all things,
with my whole heart and soul, because
you are all good and worthy of all my
love. I love my neighbor as myself for
the love of you. I forgive all who have
injured me, and I ask pardon of those
whom I have injured. Amen.

Leader: Choosing to do the right thing is
choosing to love. In preparation for
Confirmation, you are considering ways
you express your love of God and your
neighbor, your willingness to forgive
others, and your desire to be forgiven.
Let us thank God for helping us show
these acts of love.

All: Loving God, as we prepare for
Confirmation, we look to the
Beatitudes to support and guide us
in our everyday lives. We express our
love for you and your Son, Jesus Christ,
by acting in faith-filled ways. We
thank you for your forgiveness when
we stray and ask for the strength to
forgive others.
Amen.

summary

FAITH SUMMARY

Christians, called to love as Jesus loved, have the Beatitudes and Works of Mercy as guidelines.

REMEMBER

What are the Beatitudes?

The Beatitudes are Jesus' guidelines for Christian living. The Beatitudes include a code of conduct and the promise of happiness in God's kingdom.

What is your conscience?

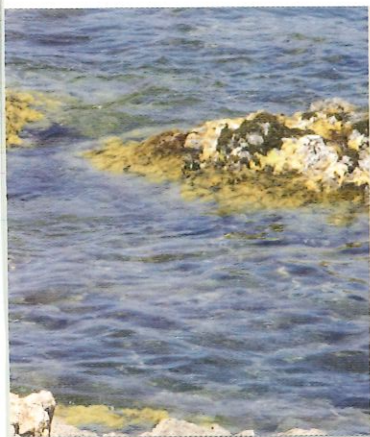
Conscience is that deepest part of yourself that directs you toward choosing good and avoiding evil.

What is Jesus' new commandment?

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (John 13:34)

MY CONFIRMATION JOURNAL

Use your journal to enter more deeply into this chapter. Quietly spend time reflecting and recording on journal pages 31–40.



Loving God, guide me in my everyday life to make good decisions and act in faith-filled ways. Thank you for forgiving me when I stray. Give me the strength to do the same for others. Amen.

Words to Know

Beatitudes
conscience
Corporal Works
of Mercy

Spiritual Works
of Mercy
Ten Commandments
virtue

REACH OUT

1. Think about what you have seen on TV or read about in the newspaper lately. Who is in need of justice today? Write about someone in need. Then write what you can do to help.
2. Choose one of the Beatitudes and illustrate it. Then write a description of your illustration.
3. The Beatitudes give us ways to help others. Think about how you can help out at home. You might talk to your parents about it, or you may wish to be a "secret helper." Choose at least one new way you can help. Write about it and keep track of your actions and their outcomes.
4. Evaluate how often you reach out in love. For each response of love, rate yourself **1** (not very often), **2** (sometimes), or **3** (often). Think about how you can improve the area where you are most challenged.

_____ Listen

_____ Share

_____ Serve

_____ Pray

_____ Forgive

_____ Welcome

_____ Express thanks

WITH MY SPONSOR

Arrange with your sponsor to share your insights, questions, and ideas from this chapter and how they relate to your conversations from the *Faith to Faith* magazine.

review

SERVICE WORD SEARCH

Circle the following words in the word search.

Beatitudes **conscience** **corporal**
kingdom **service** **spiritual**

F	R	W	X	S	L	C	E	M	E
O	W	C	G	E	C	O	C	R	E
L	C	M	O	D	G	N	I	K	U
B	O	N	S	U	I	S	V	R	Y
E	R	P	N	T	U	C	R	A	J
V	P	O	Y	I	P	I	E	O	M
I	O	Y	S	T	B	E	S	L	Q
P	R	C	V	A	O	N	L	U	X
K	A	J	B	E	W	C	W	C	M
X	L	F	W	B	A	E	C	L	B
I	S	P	I	R	I	T	U	A	L

MAKE IT TRUE

Write **T** for true and **F** for false. Make each false statement true.

_____ 1. The Beatitudes begin the Sermon on the Mount.

_____ 2. The core of the law, the Ten Commandments, was given by God to Moses.

_____ 3. The Beatitudes replace the Ten Commandments.

_____ 4. Your intention must be good in order to make a good choice.

CONFIRMATION CROSSWORD

Across

1. directs us toward good
3. called children of God
4. Our conscience helps us make good ones.
6. We are called to provide it.

Down

2. Moses gave us these.
5. Jesus appreciated this in people.

