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# From Love to the Law to Love

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CI Module III Formative Session I  
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## **Why Beatitudes before the Ten Commandments in the third section of the CCC**

Moses received the Commandments (Ex 20) before Jesus gave the Beatitudes (Mt 5; Lk 6)

Third part of the CCC (Life in Christ) covers blessing/beatitude, morality, virtue and the Ten Commandments (the Law)

## **What comes first is NEITHER the blessing nor the law: What comes first is LOVE (God's love for us)**

He created us in his image and likeness – *imago Dei* (Gen 1:26) Paragraph 1 of the CCC:

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.”

Blessed: fortunate – connoting happiness – either in this life (more so in the next)

God, perfectly happy, wants us to share in that happiness

## **Jesus lays out a way in which we can live this happiness in the beatitudes**

“The beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence.” (CCC 1719)

Living the beatitudes will bring us happiness

Love is the source of the beatitudes

They ‘flesh-out’ the Commandments

Jesus used them to make known the love behind the Law

Each begins with “Blessed”

Pope Saint Leo the Great: the beatitudes give us a way to follow in order to achieve the ultimate blessing

He called them “steps that lead to that high happiness...for whoever longs for eternal blessedness.”<sup>1</sup>

They begin with “**Blessed are the poor in spirit.**” (Mt 5:3)

Not only the first, but the one required in order to achieve the rest

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<sup>1</sup> Leo the Great, Saint and Pope (5<sup>th</sup> c), *Sermo* 95 1-2: PL 54, 461-462, On the Beatitudes (See LOH Book IV, Office of Readings, Twenty-second week in Ordinary Time)

What is “poor in spirit?”

Not economically poor per Saint Leo

Poor in spirit tells us we need to be humble

Knowing who God is and who we are in light of him

### **Eternal blessedness is what Scripture, the Church and the CCC are about**

They tell us a love story

How God loves us so much that he wants us to live his blessedness forever with him

He reveals himself as our origin and our destiny

We respond with the belief in him in the Creed (**Part 1 of the CCC**)

Through Jesus, we join the family of God, enriched and graced by the sacraments

We celebrate together – LITURGICALLY (**Part 2 of the CCC**)

We need to live in harmony within this family as Christ models for us

To live rightly/morally, loving as we have been loved. (**Part 3 of the CCC**)

“We love because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19)

### **As fallen human beings, we need to be formed to use our free will rightly**

We are created with a conscience

An innate sense of what is right and wrong

Of what is good and what is the greatest good

A spark of the divine

The law written in our hearts

“I will put my law within them; I will write it upon their hearts” (Jer 31:33)

We need to form, develop and listen to our consciences and act on them

### **Virtue**

The habitual and firm disposition to do what is good Human

virtues: those we practice to make them habitual By our

own efforts aided by grace

Founded on the three theological virtues:

Faith, Hope and Love

God’s gift to us

Trinitarian image of the three theological virtues

Faith: Jesus

By faith in Jesus we are justified (Rom 3:26)

Faith of Jesus (Gal 2:16)

Love: the Holy Spirit

The eternal exchange of love between and the Son

Hope: the Father

Our divine origin and destiny

The law implanted in our hearts from birth

His plan revealed in Scripture

All human virtues rooted in the three theological virtues

Four human virtues foundational to the rest

the cardinal virtues (Latin *cardo* hinge) All

other human virtues HINGE on them

**From the time of the fall until Jesus came, God was preparing his people to receive him in his Son so that we could enjoy his eternal blessedness**

“in the fullness of time.” (Gal 4:4)

Jesus is “the seed” of Gen 3:15

“...he (the seed) shall bruise your (the serpent/Satan’s) head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15)

God manifests himself in word and deed; man is called to do the same

He created all mankind to be his children

“In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth whom the Lord of hosts has blessed saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage.” (Is 19:24-25)

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16)

### **The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude**

Acknowledged by Greek/Roman philosophers

Socrates (Greek, 470-399 B.C.) - One God; Plato (Greek, ~427-347 B.C.) God is over all the universe; Aristotle (Greek, 384-322 B.C.) - Man was created with some destiny (telos); Cicero (Roman, 106-43 B.C.) - the origin and destiny of the human soul is heavenly

Virtues lead us to eternal blessedness

Humility foundational to the virtues

Therefore, we need to become humble, “Poor in spirit” Knowing who God is and who we are in relation to him

Saint Augustine, asked to name the four cardinal virtues, said, “Humility, humility, humility and humility”; “... in the soul in which this virtue (i.e. humility) does not exist there cannot be any other virtue EXCEPT in mere appearance.”<sup>2</sup>

Becoming poor in spirit or humble: Know God (not just about God)

Develop a relationship with him

Communicate with him

Pray

Listening as well as talking

Scripture is his Word

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Prayer For Beginners*, (Ignatius; New York, 2000), 120

### **Prudence is the charioteer or leader of the four cardinal virtues**

Leads us to look for and do what is truly good (CCC 1806)

A guide to all the other human virtues

Assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

The moral life and practice of virtue helped and sustained the gifts of the Spirit

### **Wisdom – a gift of the Holy Spirit (Is 11:3) Enables**

us to know the purpose and plan of God

Makes it easier to choose and do the right thing in the right way

The beginning of wisdom is “fear of the Lord” (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7, 9:10; Sir 1:14)

Revere of the Lord

Acknowledging the preeminence of God in all things

### **Fear of the Lord leads to being poor in spirit (i.e. humble) leads to virtue**

To be virtuous: Avoid doing what is evil and wrong; Practice doing good

The story of the rich young man

“...You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 19:19)

Possessed by his possessions vs. using them to help others in need

He needed to love others and act on that love

He was first loved; “We love because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19)

### **The Ten Commandments are given out of love for love**

God loves us, works with us gradually (CCC 53)

The origin of the Law is love, the point of the Law is love

The origin of the Beatitudes is love, the point of the beatitudes is love

So why wasn't Moses given the beatitudes

Israelites had been weakened

Enculturated to a way of life in Egypt not focused on the one true God

Forgot the God of their fathers

Rebelled ten times as they wandered in the desert (Nu 11-25). (See also Ps 104, 105, 114, 135)

Not ready to respond to the beatitudes

Similar to early Christians of Gentile background – like children

“I have fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it” (1 Cor 3:2)

They needed a custodian or guardian – *paedagogus* in Greek

A nanny charged with forming them in morals and virtue

The law was this custodian/guardian/nanny

“...the law was our custodian” (Gal 3:24)

Saint Paul says, that with Christ, we no longer need the custodian Christ is the embodiment of the way to live rightly

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6) Per  
Saint Paul we need faith in and the faith of Jesus  
With this faith we have HOPE of returning to our Father  
Through the Holy Spirit that we are given the ability to LOVE so that we  
may live with the Father eternally

**When Christ came, the people were ready for more than the Law**

Jesus, the fullness of God’s revelation of himself, elevated the Law with the  
Beatitudes

He IS the love behind the law

He demonstrated that the Law or the Ten Commandments are a way of showing  
love for God and love for others

**NOTE:** When Moses was given the law it was on a high place, with a cloud of  
smoke, lightning and thunder

The Israelites were terrified

Asked Moses to act as a mediator so they would not have to hear the Lord  
anymore (Ex 20:19)

Jesus gave the Beatitudes on a high place, with no cloud, lightning or thunder

In a tranquil setting with people drawn to him

The spirit of terror that the Israelites experienced replaced by a spirit of love

**Love was ALWAYS behind the Law**

Look at the Ten Commandments as more than just a code to live by

Look at them through the lens of love

**Why are the Ten Commandments presented after the Beatitudes (and virtues)**

Both are the means to the end

That END is love It

comes first and last

What was begun in love ends in love

**From Love to the Law to Love**

“Law finds its fulfillment in love” (Rom 13:10)