
Blessed Kateri, Woman of the Beatitudes



Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

When Kateri was four years old, smallpox raged through her village, killing her parents and baby brother. Her skin was left with disfiguring pockmarks, and her vision was seriously impaired. For the rest of her life, she would cover her head with a shawl to shield her from the sunlight. Nearsighted, she spent long hours in her longhouse doing her fine beadwork, and making clothes for the people of her village. Kateri did not let this handicap embitter her. She took advantage of her solitary life to meditate and to pray. Thus, she was able to grow as a contemplative, a woman keenly sensitive to God's presence in her heart.

Kateri united all the subsequent hardships of her life to that of the agony of Jesus as he died on Calvary. She understood the power of His suffering, and this is why she is often depicted holding a simple wooden Cross. After her death, she appeared in a vision to Anastasia, her adoptive mother, and told her, "My mother, look carefully at this cross I am wearing. See how beautiful it is! Oh, how I loved it on earth, and oh, how I love it in paradise!"

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

This is possibly the most misunderstood of the Beatitudes. When we hear the word "meek" it is easy to picture a passive timidity, a kind of 'doormat' mentality. This is far from the truth! Meekness, for which a better word might be "docility," is the virtue whereby we make God's will the center of our lives. Humbly submitting our desires and hopes to Him, our hearts remain soft and open. The meek person is the one who prays with heartfelt conviction, "Thy will be done and Thy Kingdom come." To be meek is to give over the need to control one's life. Far from indicating passivity, true meekness can blaze forth in a life lived with energy, enthusiasm and great courage. St. Paul, a fiery and lion-hearted man was first and foremost a meek man, because his single-minded determination was to everywhere and always do the will of God.

So too, Blessed Kateri. When she and her friends at the "praying village," (the term used to describe the Jesuit mission where she lived the last few years of her life) approached Father Cholonec and asked him to help them start an order of sisters, he told them that they were too young in the faith. They abandoned the idea.

Instead of arguing, Kateri accepted this direction and yielded to the authority of her priest. Thus, she meekly subjugated her desire to what she understood was the will of God as expressed by the man in whom God had placed authority.

Glen Smith

The Hands of Holy Orders

"When I'm in front of a priest, I just want to see his hands"...

Look at the palms of your hands and remember back to that day your bishop anointed them and sent you forth to love and serve us...



hands have reached out and grasped ours in a prayer circle of love... Think of the hands, young and nervous, which your hands have joined in the Sacrament of Matrimony... Think of the sick in mind and body who have come to you seeking help and left with hope alive in their hearts again... Think of the dying bodies these hands have anointed into Paradise.

Remember the plans you had that day for these hands to gather and minister to your people?

... Think back to the babies these hands have baptized... Think of the children these hands have prepared for First Communion, and Confirmation... Think of the hundreds of homilies these hands have written; carefully chosen words that transformed lives... Think of the countless times these hands have been held up in blessing and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Now think of your last Mass, and so many others, when you took plain bread and wine into these hands, and changed them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ... Think of the hands, our hands, into which you placed His Precious Body and the cup of His Precious Blood. Think of the retreats, the missions, the days and nights of renewal that these hands have prepared... Think of the people these hands have gathered and touched and sent forth from these experiences, with a new understanding and love for each other and for our Catholic Church... Think of the times these

Today, we anoint your hands anew with our love; with the love of your entire Catholic family. If ever, in the days ahead, you feel lonely and discouraged, please remember these words. Please hold up your hands and look at them, and remember how they fed us the Bread of Life, how they brought hope back into our lives, how they comforted us, healed us, and welcomed us home to our church again.

We wish we could take you by the hand and stand at the busiest intersection in town and shout to the world, Look every one. This is our beloved priest, in whom we are well pleased.

These hands of yours are the hands of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. We reverence them and we cannot live our lives without them... without YOU. Thank you for faithfully loving and serving us. We are so proud that you are OUR beloved priest.

Larry and Mary Sue Eck
Bob and Rita Boeke