**My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**Some of you may remember years ago when the irreverent Englishman known as Monty Python produced a movie called *LIFE OF BRIAN*. One thesis of the movie was “what would happen if some of Jesus’ teaching had been mis-heard?**

**There is a scene which begins with Jesus on a high rock—surrounded by a heavenly glow. We hear his words loud and clear:**

**“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 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 the children of God.”**

**Then the camera pulls back to the back of the crowd, which is a long way off. An old woman shouts, “Speak up!” Her son tries to shush her, but she hollers, “Well, I can’t hear a thing! Blessed are the what?” A man standing nearby tries to help, “I think it was “Blessed are the cheesemakers”. The old woman says, “What’s so special about the cheesemakers”? Another man says, “Well, obviously it’s not meant to be taken literally; it refers to any maufacturers of dairy products.”**

***THE LIFE OF BRIAN* portrays Jesus as a sincere teacher and leader, but it is the listeners who get it all wrong—and they quarrel and squabble all through his sermon. Things haven’t changed much, have they? The problem is not in the teaching. The problem lies in our own hearts as we try to understand and apply the teaching of the Gospel.**

**Today is All Saints’ Day, the feast we honor those who gone before us, whose memory is precious to us, and we revere, not just because they have made it over, but by their lives they have shown us the way. It is no accident that these challenging words of The Beatitudes are chosen for this special day because it is in these words that we come to understand the faith of a saint.**

**The word Beatitude comes from the Latin which means blessed or happy. But, because they point us in the direction of holiness of life, I prefer to call them Attitudes of Being. Being what? Being a saint, of course. Or perhaps, better said, Attitudes of Becoming a saint.**

**It’s important to recognize that in both Matthew’s and Luke’s versions that while Matthew has Jesus going up the mountain and Luke has him going down to the plain, where the people are gathered, that in both instances Jesus is not talking to the multitude, but to his disciples.**

**For example, where Matthew has Jesus saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”, and Luke quotes him as, “Blessed are you who are poor”, in both instances he is speaking directly to his disciples, not to the mass of humanity. Hunger, thirst, and poverty are the miserable condition for most of the world’s population. Jesus is not suggesting that somehow their suffering is a source of happiness or blessedness. Rather he is saying that his disciples can find happiness even in the most dire circumstances because they are his disciples and he will never abandon them.**

**In other words He is saying to those who most sincerely seek to follow him, “Don’t despair if things haven’t worked out for you like you hoped financially; don’t give up if you are hurting emotionally; don’t let go of my promises if you are anxious about someone you love. I will never forget you and I will be with you in every circumstance of your life. You are mine and your hunger one day will be satisfied and your weeping one day will be turned to laughter. If you are rejected by your friends because you are faithful to me, don’t let it get you down. We’ll have the last word.**

**These are Christ’s promises to those who would be his disciples. These are the promises he makes to his saints. He’s not promising us a rose garden, but if we find ourselves in the wilderness, he’ll help us grow roses there. His point is that there will never come a time in the lives of those who follow him when all is lost—it may feel that way for a minute—but He’ll make a way where there is no way; He’ll open doors you can’t even see.**

**Last week a young friend called me, distraught because his best friend had overdosed on heroin. He was in the emergency room of the hospital with him, even though this “best friend” had stolen a large sum of money from him to feed his addiction. My young friend was crying because his buddy was refusing to go into rehab and didn’t know what to do. I told him, “Just walk away from him. You can’t help him, if he’s unwilling to help himself.” He said, “I can’t just leave him here.” I said, “You have to. Just tell him he’s on his own. That you’ll pray for him and I will too. That he’s in a place that only God can help him, if he will accept it. Otherwise, he’s a dead man walking.” With some misgiving, he did as I said. He even changed his phone number so his buddy couldn’t get him and ask for help.**

**Two days later he called me praising God and thanking me. His buddy’s Mom called him and told him that her son not only agreed to go into rehab, but his father’s insurance would cover all the expense. On top of that he said that he had told his boss of his worry over his friend, even though he had stolen so much money from him. His boss then offered him ten hours overtime at time-and-a-half that almost made up for all that he lost.**

**My Sisters and Brothers in Christ, that’s how God works for those who trust in Him, for those who stand on His Word. It doesn’t always work out that quickly, but He will work it out.**

**My young friend has called me again and again to thank me. Each time I tell him that I did nothing but pray with him, it was his faith and his compassion that saved his friend and resolved his loss. And I believe that! It was his Attitude—his aAttitude of being—his ATTITUDE OF BECOMING A SAINT.**