

# “Claiming Our Inheritance”

## Living Life More Abundantly



Men & Women's Preached Silent Retreat

November 30-December 2, 2012

Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett Retreat Center at the Palisades



# Belief & Fantasy

- ✦ Belief comes easily to children as does fantasy.
- ✦ Fantasy allows a child to make their backyard into a famous battlefield. (DisneyLand)
- ✦ Belief is the opposite — engages the real to form a relationship.
- ✦ Loving parents will provide food, shelter, comfort in times of trouble, etc. This is part of belief.



# The Joy of Belief

Church, too, for the child, is a fascinating place of belief. The child's eyes widen to behold the images in stained glass windows depicting saints with swords conquering large dragons. Children scrutinize the shrines in the alcoves of a church. Such places serve to localize the belief that God guides and heals his people. The statues with arms spread wide seem larger than any danger the child will ever face. The stories of the Bible fill the child with the strong momentum of assurance that God knows what to do and delivers us in the end. The child can feel the relentless determination of the Wise Men, the courage of David before Goliath, the humble receptivity of the Virgin Mary, and, above all, the gentleness of Jesus. Children absorb every detail of the stories of the saints. Children believe the promise that God guides us and protects us in any peril. Children examine every inch of a holy card to see the attributes of the champions of belief. The child senses that the same God who led Abraham and stood by Moses will also act on his or her behalf.

Growing up can cramp our capacity to believe. The mystery was within reach when we were children: we believed it, and we believed God would protect us, be next to us, and guide us. We believed God was on our side.

**from *Living The Beatitudes - A Journey to Life in Christ* by Fr. J. Brian Bransfield p.2**



# The Decay of Belief

But then something happened. As we grew up, the world became complex and often painful. We walked more quickly past the stained glass windows and allowed the alcoves to gather dust. We no longer lingered before the shrines and the statues. We experienced tests and trials. We learned what the word "cancer" means. Hollywood blockbusters began to take the place of the biblical stories. Highly-paid actors and actresses captured our fantasy world. The people we thought would live forever, such as our parents and close friends, died. The world we once trusted hurt us. Our early beliefs were challenged and the fantasies of the world seemed to offer a quick escape.

Instead of storms outside in the night, storms raged inside. We felt a hunger deeper than that for food. We sensed a darkness even when the lights shone. The angels seemed to fly away, back into the stories. Monsters began to take the form of a "business as usual" world of trying to fit in and competing to get ahead. The devil, who uses disguise as a standard operating procedure (cf. 2 Cor 11:14), seemed more comfortable seated behind a desk in a suit and tie rather than with horns, a tail, and a pitchfork.

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# The Decay of Belief

The holy water seemed unable to wash away the more complex evil stains. Holy cards became sad reminders of the most recent wake or funeral we attended. It was more difficult to connect the worlds inside and outside the Church. They seemed to stop fitting together and grew apart. Many people stopped being naive, only to become depressed. Success was no longer about doing the right thing, but about doing my own thing. The connection between the Church and the rest of the world was severed.

**from *Living The Beatitudes - A Journey to Life in Christ* by Fr. J. Brian Bransfield pp.3-4**



# Evangelization Is\_\_\_\_\_?

Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelization. The above questions will ask, whether they are people to whom Christ has never been proclaimed, or baptized people who do not practice, or people who live as nominal Christians but according to principles that are in no way Christian, or people who are seeking, and not without suffering, something or someone whom they sense but cannot name. Other questions will arise, deeper and more demanding ones, questions evoked by this witness which involves presence, sharing, solidarity, and which is an essential element, and generally the first one, in evangelization."[51]



# This Witness Is Important

All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers. We are thinking especially of the responsibility incumbent on immigrants in the country that receives them.



# The Full Reality - Jesus Christ

Nevertheless this always remains insufficient, because even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not explained, justified - what Peter called always having "your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have"[52] - and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed. The history of the Church, from the discourse of Peter on the morning of Pentecost onwards, has been intermingled and identified with the history of this proclamation. At every new phase of human history, the Church, constantly gripped by the desire to evangelize, has but one preoccupation: whom to send to proclaim the mystery of Jesus? In what way is this mystery to be proclaimed? How can one ensure that it will resound and reach all those who should hear it? This proclamation - kerygma, preaching or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization.

**Pope Paul VI *Evangelii Nutiandi* #21-22**



# Evangelization

- ✦ Is a detailed and lifelong reality.
- ✦ Can't happen without the kerygma "Good News" of how different life can be.
- ✦ It is a deeply personal reality.
- ✦ Sometimes the foundation is missing which results in all sorts of problems. (ie "baptized but not evangelized, catechized, etc)



# The Key To Our Vocation - The Beatitudes

- ✦ The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints. (CCC 1717)



# The Desire For Happiness

- ✦ Very important and often missing component. God is not some rival we compete against.
- ✦ The key to a joyful experience of life is living the Beatitudes.
- ✦ The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it: We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated. How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you. God alone satisfies. (CCC 1718)
- ✦ The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith. (CCC 1719)



# The Reality of Our World

- ✦ People are anxious, stressed out, overextended, neglecting their soul. We see this clearly by the lack of peace. Vatican II “Peace is not merely the absence of war.”
- ✦ Special interest groups are not thinking of anyone but themselves. The common good is disappearing.
- ✦ We must entice people by our example and not give up. Hope is always on the horizon for a Spirit-Filled Person. But things are going to get tough.



# For Tonight and Tomorrow

- ✦ Examine things, situations, in your own life that are robbing you of peace. What can you change? What can't you change? Be thinking of things to bring to the Lord in our Healing Service tomorrow night.
- ✦ Tomorrow we will explore the Beatitudes in great detail and show how they can help us overcome difficulties.
- ✦ We will also examine common spiritual disorders and apply wisdom from the Saints to help us live a more joyful life.



# Take Me To The King

Tamela Mann

## **Chorus:**

**Take Me To The  
King  
I don't have much  
to bring  
My heart is torn in  
pieces  
It's my offering  
Take Me To The  
King**

## **What's left to do?**

**Truth is I'm weak  
No strength to fight  
No tears to cry  
Even if I tried  
But still my soul  
Refuses to die  
One touch-will  
change-my life**

## **Lay me at the throne**

**Leave me there  
alone  
To gaze upon Your  
glory  
And sing to You  
this song  
Please Take Me To  
The King**

## **Verse 1:**

**Truth is I'm tired  
Options are few  
I'm trying to pray  
But where are you?  
I'm all church'd  
out  
Hurt and abused  
I can't fake**

## **Chorus:**

**Take Me To The  
King  
I don't have much  
to bring  
My heart's torn into  
pieces  
It's my offering**

## **Verse 2:**

**Truth is it's time  
To stop playing  
these games  
We need a word  
For the people's  
pain**