



Blessed are the Poor

Jesus had a soft spot for the poor. It might be fair to say, he preferred the poor. Poverty exists everywhere; you needn't go to a "developing nation" to find it. It's down your block. Don't think so? You're likely not looking hard enough. Here, Jesus challenges us to look. Because he tells the poor, the hungry, "I see you, and yours is coming."

Sometimes the rich engage in the narrative that poor choices lead to poor people:

"They made bad financial decisions."

"He ran all his money into the ground on drugs or alcohol."

"She didn't take her education seriously and now has a low paying job."

But in truth, economic injustice in the United States is far more complicated, and often combined with big ticket societal issues like systemic racism, sexism, immigration status, employment discrimination for marginalized groups like the LGBT+ community, generational poverty, or the geographic location you were born. Americans get very comfortable at living comfortably, and confronting poverty takes people to a place they don't like. But Jesus tells us over and over again, that the vulnerable are our mission. In the words of Óscar Romero, "It is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing."

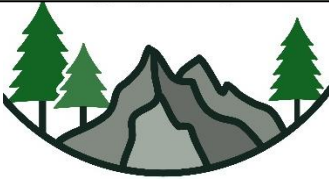
Our calling as Christians is to live life generously. And not for our own desires, or those of our immediate circle. But for those on the fringes. Think of the good that could grow if we died to self a little more, and wholeheartedly embraced the work that Jesus has given us to do. Do you see the Holy Spirit in the faces of the poor? Are you actually looking?

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Questions For Reflection:

Reflect upon a time when you made a judgment on a person or place when you had limited or incomplete information.

Discuss your experience with explanations for poverty. What are your own explanations? Do they need investigating?



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THE EPISCOPAL NETWORK FOR STEWARDSHIP