

## OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28<sup>1</sup>

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written  
for our learning:  
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,  
and inwardly digest them,  
that we may embrace and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## MATTHEW 5<sup>2</sup>

### The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus[a] saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### Footnotes

Matthew 5:1 Gk *he*

Matthew 5:11 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack *falsely*

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<sup>1</sup> Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

<sup>2</sup> All Bible quotations and footnotes are from the New Revised Standard Version at Biblegateway.com New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

## OVERVIEW<sup>3</sup> PART 1: SERMON ON THE MOUNT, THE BEATITUDES

### Sermon on the Mount (SM)

This is Matthew's greatest composition. It weaves together material from Q with uniquely Matthean passages into a harmonious masterpiece of ethical and religious teaching. The SM is not a summarization of religion. It presupposes the existence of Christian communities. It is associated with the Kingdom of God and is a Christological document. Jesus is on the mountain as the new Moses.

### The Beatitudes

Beatitude<sup>4</sup>, "Blessed", appears in Greek in Pindar (b.522-518 BCE), in OT writings and in the NT 50 times. The word is used almost exclusively for religious joy.

In the OT writings, Blessed is found most frequently in the Psalms promising material and spiritual well-being as rewards for those who love and obey YHWH. Such benefits were expected to be realized during one's life because no concept of life after death existed until after the Babylonian Exile. Occasionally pain and loss were interpreted as a means to greater wisdom and blessedness (Psalm 94:12-15; Job 42).<sup>5</sup>

The major distinction in the NT between blessedness in the OT and the NT is that the NT emphasizes spiritual and eschatological (end times) rewards. Hence, the NT blessings can be paradoxical, it does not appear to be good, but its ultimate certainty rests on the power and promise of God.<sup>6</sup>

The Matthew and Luke form of beatitudes are in many ways typical of the usage in the NT. What is unique in Matthew and Luke is the succinctness. The distinguishing factors are their content and context in the proclamation of Jesus and the theology of the evangelists.

If the central purpose of Matthew<sup>7</sup> is to proclaim the advent of the new Messiah and the new Moses, who has proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven (God), then the Beatitudes serve to describe the characteristics of the ones who give their allegiance to the kingdom.

**Fundamentally the Beatitudes represent an exercise of the imagination** where the eschatological promises to the poor, the meek, and the persecuted reveal that all is not how it appears.

The truth, like the kingdom, is hidden and the future will bring light to the true situation of the world. Those who use the eye of the mind/ in order to foresee and live for the future promised by the beatitudes will, with their faith, possess secret vision and hope that makes the powerlessness and suffering bearable.

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<sup>3</sup> Sources include notes from Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Davies, W.B. and Allison, Dale C., Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, France, R. T., Mills, Watson E., Morris, Leon. (See bibliography at [www.slowreligion.com](http://www.slowreligion.com))

<sup>4</sup> Beatitude: borrowed from Latin *beātitudō*, from *beātus* "happy, fortunate" + *-tūdō*, suffix of abstract nouns (Source: Merriam-Webster) (*evlogiménos* Gk) and (*baruch*, Hebrew) with similar meanings.

<sup>5</sup> Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mills, Watson E. General editor.

<sup>6</sup> Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mills, Watson E. General editor.

<sup>7</sup> Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mills, Watson E. General editor.

**Isaiah 61<sup>8</sup> influence on Matthew 5**

Isaiah 61 points to the messiah who will rule on the throne of the house of David in righteousness, and Jesus began his ministry in Matthew quoting from Isaiah 61 and forming his teachings around it.

**Comparison of Isaiah 61 with Matthew 5:**

Isaiah 61:1-10	Matthew 5:3-12
1 "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,	3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2 "to comfort all who mourn,"	4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
1 "he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,"	5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
"Righteousness" occurs 3 times In Isaiah 61: 3, 8, 11	6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
No parallel	7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
1 "to bind up the brokenhearted,"	8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
No parallel	9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
"Righteousness" occurs 3 times In Isaiah 61: 3, 8, 11	10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
10 "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my whole being shall exult in my God,	11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

<sup>8</sup> Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Volumes 1,1988

A closer look at each beatitude in Matthew<sup>9</sup>:

Matthew 5 Passages	Background on Terms
3 "Blessed are the <i>poor in spirit</i> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	<b>Blessed:</b> <sup>10</sup> meaning being free from daily cares and worries, being prosperous, or being those who neither toil nor suffer. In the NT it can also mean religious joy.
	<b>Poor:</b> One who is needy, dependent on others, a beggar. Those in special need of God's help. It can also mean the meek, humiliated, and oppressed people of God.
	<b>In spirit:</b> Matthew shifts the emphasis from economic to the religious sphere. The poor in spirit can be seen as those longing for God.
	<b>Is the kingdom of heaven:</b> The present tense "is" stands in contrast to the future tenses in the second members of the beatitudes (4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9). The present also perhaps hints that the kingdom is already in some sense present and therefore a blessing enjoyed now.
4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	Reference to Isaiah 61:2-3 "to comfort <i>all who mourn</i> ". Why do the people of God mourn? From Isaiah's perspective it is not because of sin. Isaiah viewed God's people oppressed by the wicked.
	<b>Mourn:</b> there is a discrepancy between 5:4 and 9:15. Jesus declares that the wedding guests (his disciples) cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom (Jesus) is with them. Matthew addresses the disciples who mourn (5:4) and also excuses them for not mourning. It reflects the tension created by the kingdom of God being present and coming in the gospel tradition.
	<b>Be comforted:</b> comfort and mourn in combination are catch words in Isaiah. In this context, being comforted could be interpreted to mean being given strength or empowerment to persevere. Note: 1) the passive is a divine passive, God will comfort the mourners; 2) the comfort promised is not in any consolation which can be known in the world, but rather is an other-worldly joy and satisfaction; 3) God's favor does not result from mourning perse, but upon those who lament the sin which mars God's choice of Israel; 4) Matthew is assuming that the people have a present state of mourning as the basis for the blessing. He is not encouraging people to mourn.; 5) 5:4 is indicative not an imperative; 6) the theme of God turning sorrow into joy is common in Jewish tradition and will dominate chapter 28.
5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	Based on Psalm 37:11 and has no parallel in Luke. Psalm 37:10-11 "Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there. 11 But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant prosperity."
	<b>Meek:</b> was intended to make plain the dimensions of "poor" in 5:3. Hence 5:3 and 5:5 are in synonymous parallelism. There is no real difference in meaning between the two.
	<b>To inherit the land:</b> has been spiritualized and is not a concrete promise of specific geography. (It could be the land where ever believers are, or a specific place. Unclear.) It can also be seen as inherit the earth – both as all of God's creation and as an attribute of humility where we all recognize our being of the earth.

<sup>9</sup> Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Volumes 1,1988

<sup>10</sup> Lemcio, Eugene, Matthew is reading the OT in Greek. In Psalm 1:1, the Hebrew *eshrey* is translated by μακαριος [*makarios*], as in the Beatitudes.

<p>6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.</p>	<p><b>Righteousness:</b> is to be earnestly and habitually sought as though it was food and drink. It is a reference to righteous longing, an active seeking. Adding righteous: 1) clarifies the object of the hunger; 2) it brings the Beatitudes into closer connection to the Sermon on the Mount in which righteousness is a prominent theme; 3) It harkens back to Isaiah 61.3; and 4) it is the right conduct that God commands. It encourages those who are trying to be righteous as well as the righteous.</p>
	<p>Righteousness in the OT<sup>11</sup> had two meanings: pre-Babylonian exile it characterized covenant behavior between YHWH and his people. The people responded to YHWH with faith, one fully trusted in God’s behavior due to the covenant. Post-Babylonian exile righteousness brought increased emphasis on an individual’s rights and responsibilities before God, it was seen as individuals keeping the commandments of the Torah.</p>
	<p>In the Matthean Beatitude context<sup>12</sup>, righteousness means longing, seeking, finding, and then doing God’s will. It is an attitude rooted in inward grace. As a sacramental theology it is an outward sign of an inward grace.</p>
<p>7, 8, 9 and 10</p>	<p>From Q and are designed to create correlations between the beginning of the SM and the material after it.</p>
<p>7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.</p>	<p>Matt 18:33, Psalm 18:25-26. <i>Mercy</i> is a central theme in Matthew: it is a fundamental demand (9:13; 12:7; 23:23), supported by Jesus’ words (5:43-48; 18:21-35; 25:31-46), and by his example/deeds (9:27-31; 15:21-28; 17:14-18; 20:29-34). It is also consistent with the OT and Jewish tradition as mercy is both an outward act and an inward emotion. It is a human virtue as well as a divine attribute.</p>
	<p>Jesus gives mercy renewed emphasis and vividness by placing it at the center of his proclamation (9:13; 12:7; 23:23; 25:31-46) and by making it plain that mercy should be shown to all, the people at the fringe as well as to enemies (5:43-48).</p>
	<p>Mercy is also central to Jesus’ critique of the Pharisees. Justice, mercy, and faith in behavior are key indicators of remaining faithful to God. The recognition of God’s mercy and the practice of mercy is a heart shaping experience.</p>
<p>8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.</p>	<p><b>Pure in heart:</b> no parallel in Luke, compare to Matt 11:29 Jesus is “lowly in heart”, probably from Psalm 24:3-4. In biblical tradition the heart is the real or true self, psyche, at its deepest level. It is the seat of emotions, volition, and intellect, as well as the internal sphere in which divinity is encountered.</p>
	<p>Purity of heart must involve integrity, a correspondence between outward action and inward thought, a lack of duplicity, and the desire to please God. It is to will one thing, God’s will, with all of one’s being<sup>13</sup>.  <i>Pure in heart</i> may also be the summary of the human condition of the virtues listed in the previous Beatitudes: <i>poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness and the merciful.</i></p>
<p>9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.</p>	<p><b>Peacemakers:</b> calls for a positive action, reconciliation, to bring about peace. The theme peace is not prominent in Matthew. That would argue that this has a pre-Matthew origin in the oral tradition. Matthew does not harmonize 5:9 with 10:34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.”</p>

<sup>11</sup> Mills, Watson E., Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, 1990

<sup>12</sup> The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA

<sup>13</sup> Søren Kierkegaard

	Note: it may be that Matthew recognizes that Jesus Christ is an inherently divisive figure. People are called to choose between the old ways and his way. In Matthew, Jesus recognizing this and sees the need for peacemakers, because the choice causes strife. It can be seen as a call for reconciliation rather than separation.
	<b>Children of God or Sons of God:</b> occurs only here in Matthew. In harmony with Johannine and Pauline traditions (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-15; Galatians 3:26-7; Ephesians 1:5), believers in Jesus, already children or sons of God, whom they call Father (6:9). There is also the expectation that the people of God will become the children/sons in the future, in the eschaton. Only in 1 Chronicles 22:9-10, Matthew 5:9 and 5:44-45 and Luke 6:35 are eschatological sonship and peacemaking brought together.
10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	The language is quite general and can be applied to a wide range of persecutions.
11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account.	This verse and the next serve as a conclusion to the Beatitudes and a bridge to the teaching on loving one's enemies and the remainder of the SM. The persecutions are of three types: reviled, persecuted, and spoken against. (Matthew's love of triads may be in evidence.)
12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.	<b>Rejoice and be glad:</b> the only two imperatives in the Beatitudes. The thought is that the disciples are being persecuted like the disciples of old so they too must be servants of God. Therefore they will receive great reward and knowing that they can now rejoice and be glad. Matthew rarely writes about joy and rejoicing in contrast to Luke. This reflects Matthew's solemn character and combative environment.

#### Comparison of Matthew and Luke<sup>14</sup>:

Matthew's Beatitudes deals with the ethos of the kingdom of heaven, how one's mind and body are to be. In Luke the point of view may be an expansion on the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

Matthew has 8 and Luke has 4, each matched with as statement of woe. They both reflect their own Gospel's intent and emphasis.

Matthew 5	Luke 6
3 "Blessed are the poor <b>in spirit</b> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	20 "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	20 "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	
6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst <b>for righteousness</b> , for they will be filled.	21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.
7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.	36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	45 The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good,

<sup>14</sup> Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Volumes 1, 1988

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.	35 Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.[e] Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High,
10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	
11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.	22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you[d] on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven, for that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

The last two beatitudes (5:10-12) presuppose that the readers' present state of suffering and persecution and supplies consolation. No change in behavior is envisaged.

The beatitudes provide a set of imperatives. The question is whether the primary function of the Matthean blessings is moral and whether the moral dimension excludes a promissory or conciliatory dimension.

**Matthew Chapters 5 and 23 appear to be linked<sup>15</sup>:**

Concepts	Matthew 5	Mathew 23
<b>Kingdom of heaven</b>	"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (5:3)	"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in you stop them." (23:13)
<b>Mercy</b>	"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. (5:7)	"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." (23:23)
<b>Purity</b>	"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (5:8)	"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and of the plate,[e] so that the outside also may become clean." (23:25-6)
<b>Persecution</b>	11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (5:10-12)	"For this reason I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town," (23:34)
<b>Prophets</b>	"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in	"For this reason I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and

<sup>15</sup> Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Volumes 1, 1988

	the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (5:12)	crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town,” (23:34)
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The two sections have these words in common, and they occur in the same order in both chapters. They are different in that 5:3-12 opens a discourse, and 23:13-39 concludes a discourse. Both chapters sections deal with martyrdom.

**Jesus as a Teacher**

The Matthean Jesus teaches with *exousia*, divine power and authority, and by this empowerment makes possible a new existence.

Matthew’s Beatitudes imply that Jesus is the eschatological herald of Isaiah 61 and that the qualities that they praise, meekness and mercy, are demonstrated throughout his ministry. In Matthew, Jesus is a moral model, and the SM proclaims the likeness to God of Israel (5:48) through the virtues of Jesus Christ.

**The beatitudes are blessings not requirements.** They open the SM and place it in the context of grace, just as healing comes before imperative, so does blessing come before demand. The hard demands of Matthew 5-7 presuppose God’s mercy and saving activity.

**The kingdom of God will bring eschatological comfort**, in the present and the future, a permanent inheritance, true satisfaction, obtain mercy, the vision of God and divine sonship. The word kingdom serves to foretell the eventual realization in human experience of the fullness of God’s bounteous presence, the highest or ultimate good of Matthew’s gospel.

**The dependence of 5:3-12 upon Isaiah 61:1-3 implicitly reveals the identity of the one who proclaimed the sermon on the mount.** When Jesus blesses the poor in spirit and those in mourning, Jesus is the anointed one upon whom the Spirit of God rests. He is the Messiah and he and his ministry are the fulfilment of OT prophecy.

**Isaiah 61:1-3 provides the SM with an eschatological framework and makes Jesus an eschatological figure.** Which implies: 1) the words of Jesus are the result of divine commissioning for the purpose of bringing OT prophecy to fulfilment (which sets Jesus apart from all other teachers and makes his authority intelligible.); 2) we have discerned the Mosaic motif in 5:1-2 and found that 5:3-12 sets 5:13 in an eschatological context. The following discourses on the law (5:17-48), the cult (6:1-18) and social issues (6:19-7:12) are uttered in an eschatological situation by an anointed one like Moses in the desert.

**Jesus as embodied word.** Jesus himself was meek, mourned, was righteous and fulfilled all righteousness, showed mercy, and was persecuted and reproached. So the beatitudes are illustrated and brought to life by Jesus actions. He embodies his own words and thereby becomes the model to be imitated.

**The beatitudes bring consolation and comfort to Jesus’ heavy-laden followers.** They function as practical theodicy. They do not explain evil or human suffering. But they do put them in perspective in the present context and lessen the pain and anguish while giving encouragement.

**Fundamentally the Beatitudes represent an exercise of the imagination** where the eschatological promises to the poor, the meek, and the prosecuted reveal that all is not how it appears. The truth, like the kingdom, is hidden and the future will bring light to the true situation of the world. Those who use the eye of the mind in order to foresee and live for the future promised by the beatitudes will, with their faith, possess secret vision and hope that makes the powerlessness and suffering bearable.



## REFLECTION

Where are the Beatitudes in your heart? World upside down, or world seen as God sees it?

## CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,  
 for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,  
 Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace  
 which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;  
 and we pray that, after his example,  
 we may with ready wills and hearts obey  
 the calling of our Lord to follow him;  
 through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you  
 and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

*The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun*

## GOSPEL COMPARISON<sup>16</sup>

Pericope <sup>17</sup>	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Occasion of the Sermon	4:24-5:2	3:7-13a	6:17-20a	
The Beatitudes	5:3-12		6:20b-23	
The Salt of the Earth	5:13	9:49-50	14:34-35	
The Light of the World	5:14-16	4:21	8:16	
On the Law and the Prophets	5:17-20		16:16-17	
On Murder and Anger	5:21-26		12:57-59	
On Adultery and Divorce	5:27-32	9:43-48	16:18	
On Swearing and Oaths	5:33-37			
On Retaliation	5:38-42		6:29-30	
On Love of One's Enemies	5:43-48		6:27-28 6:32-36	

<sup>16</sup> Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

<sup>17</sup> an extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

## SLOW RELIGION: GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW



*The Inspiration of St. Matthew,*  
Caravaggio, 1602

Slow Religion, The Gospel According to Matthew is a lay person-led adult education weekly series for Christians and seekers. Slow Religion uses a literary and historical approach to the ancient texts to identify and apply insights from the Gospel to today's world.

Matthew's gospel is worth studying because the author attempts to uphold Jesus' Jewish past, with Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection, in the context of the 1st Century CE Jesus movement and early church, and in a hostile Hellenistic and Jewish world.

21st Century readers recognize Matthew as the source of many of the best-known stories and sayings of Jesus as well as a social philosophy that many non-Christians believe in. Famous for its Sermon on the Mount, The Beatitudes, and other teachings, Matthew is often called the most Jewish of the Gospels, while also contributing with the Gospel of John to antisemitism.

The class is created and led by Joe Jennings and advisors include: the Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun and the Rev. Robert Gieselmann, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA; the Rev. Br. Richard Edward Helmer, Episcopal Church of our Saviour, Mill Valley, CA; Eugene E. Lemcio, PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University; the Rev. Heather Wenrick, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Seattle; and the Father Vincent Pizzuto, PhD., vicar at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Inverness CA and Full Professor at the (Jesuit) University of San Francisco, New Testament and Christian Mysticism, in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Prior Slow Religion Classes include the Gospel of According to Mark (2021-22), the Foundations of Christian Faith (2020-21), the Holy Spirit (2020), the Gospel According to John (2019-20), and Paul's Letter to the Romans (2017-8).

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