

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 9th 2015

About St. Peter Claver, S.J.

Seeing the reading from Colossians and the Beatitudes together really puts them in a different perspective. The Beatitudes are really about choices, not about circumstances. In Colossians Paul is saying that everyone has the opportunity for Salvation by following Christ. Anyone who chooses Christ, who chooses right, who dies to his evil past, can be saved in Jesus. The circumstances of birth do not matter here – Greek or Jew, slave or free, everyone has the choice to follow Christ. Anyone can choose charity over greed, can choose a spiritual path over a material path, choose love over anger, and can choose truth over lies. We must choose the right path, choose the way of the Lord, choose to die to our old evil ways, so when we do die, we will have salvation. And if we do not make that choice, salvation will not be ours.

In the Gospel Jesus says that the poor are blessed, but not just those who happen to be poor. I guess poor people can be selfish or angry or untruthful as much as the rich can. The point is in the choice of spiritual path. Those who have chosen to be poor, perhaps by being generous and charitable will have their reward in heaven for those choices. Those who choose hunger by sharing their food are blessed. Those who suffer because they follow Jesus, those who are persecuted because of their spiritual path, will get their reward in heaven. But those who are selfish and greedy – who are rich but do not share their wealth with those in need, those who eat and drink in excess while others starve at their door, who indulge with no compassion, woe to them. They laugh at others' misfortunes, but they will not have salvation who have no compassion.

It's not about circumstances. Being born poor or being born rich will not determine whether we get to heaven or not. I was born middle class – where would that put me? Neither here nor there? A poor person could still end up in Hell or a rich one in heaven based on choices. The rich man who is greedy, selfish and ruthless is not going to find salvation, but the charitable one might. Rich man, poor man, Greek or Jew, whoever puts away what is evil, angry, and selfish and chooses to live a charitable compassionate life will find salvation in the next.

Tamora Whitney-Creighton University's Journalism Department