



# Blessed Be

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Welcome to this edition of *Blessed Be*. If you have anything you wish to contribute to *Blessed Be*, or any suggestions you'd like to make, please contact me at [helenmacauley@gmail.com](mailto:helenmacauley@gmail.com)

The following poem was written by **Max Ehrmann** (1872-1945) in the 1920s, because it included the qualities Max felt he needed to focus on. He distributed it as a Christmas card in 1933, and it was later used by psychologists and also given to soldiers during WW2.

## Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly to the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

*In 1940, Max Ehrmann wrote this plea for peace:*

### **Beloved Dead**

Let nations cease this begging in prayer for peace  
As long as one nation is savage, all must remain savage  
We humans are not fallen gods, but rising brutes  
The task is ours:

Let us lift ourselves above our jungle origin;  
For hate and war substitute understanding and good will  
Without these it is the end of the earth.  
Science without love will destroy the earth

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*I was recently thinking about what it means to forgive, and I recalled this poem by  
**William Blake** with its warning of the consequences of allowing issues to remain unresolved:*

### **A Poison Tree**

I was angry with my friend:  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears  
Night and morning with my tears,  
And I sunned it with smiles  
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,  
Till it bore an apple bright,  
And my foe beheld it shine,  
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole  
When the night had veiled the pole;  
In the morning, glad, I see  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

*William Blake, 1757-1827, was an English artist and poet. From an early age he spoke of having visions. When he was aged four, he saw God at the window and at around nine years old he saw angels in a tree. He believed that his dead brother's spirit visited him and inspired him. Many of his contemporaries thought he was mad. He was critical of both political and religious authority.*

*Here are some quotes from Blake on forgiveness:*

~ The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness.

~ They who forgive the most will be most forgiven.

~ It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend.

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*At a recent Food for the Soul gathering we read this bible passage in different translations. It describes the qualities a Christian should strive for. This version is from KJV.*

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ~2 **Peter 1, 5-7**

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### **A prayer for our earth**

All-powerful God, you are ever present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no-one.

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and  
forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.

*~Pope Francis, Laudate Si'*

*The Beguines were a lay religious order of women in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. They lived in communities but did not take vows. They were free to leave at any time. A Beguine, **Hadewijch of Antwerp** was a mystic of whom little is known apart from her writings. She saw God as divine love and believed the soul longs to be reunited with that love. Here are two of her poems about love:*

### **The Madness of Love**

The madness of love  
Is a blessed fate;  
And if we understood this  
We would seek no other:  
It brings into unity  
What was divided,  
And this is the truth:  
Bitterness it makes sweet,  
It makes the stranger a neighbour,  
And what was lowly it raises on high.

### **Love's Maturity**

In the beginning Love satisfies us.  
When Love first spoke to me of love—  
How I laughed at her in return!  
But then she made me like the hazel trees,  
Which blossom early in the season of darkness,  
And bear fruit slowly.

*Also from **Hadewijch**:*

First the lover must learn charity and keep God's law. Then he shall be blessed a hundredfold, and he shall do great things without great effort, and bear all pain without suffering. And so his life will surpass human reason indeed.

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Salience: The unnoticed excellence that carries on around you every day, unremarkably  
~*Unknown author* (thanks Judy!)

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My heart I keep for Thy communion, Lord!  
And those who seek me but my body find.  
My guests may with my body converse hold,  
But my Belov'd alone holds converse with my heart.

~*Rabia Al Adawia* (718-801) *Sufi mystic*

