



# 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 [helenlmacauley@gmail.com](mailto:helenlmacauley@gmail.com)*

***Angela of Foligno** (1248-1309) was born into a wealthy Umbrian family. She married and had children and lived what she later considered a life of sin. After an earthquake 1279 and an ongoing war with Perugia, she became afraid of damnation, and prayed to St Francis, who told her in a vision to go to confession. She then became very devout. Three years after her conversion, her mother, husband and all her children died within a few months of each other, and while saddened by their deaths, she felt free now to devote herself to her religious life. She sold all her possessions and entered the Third Order of St Francis. She became a guide to the many women who joined her. She established a religious community but refused enclosure so that they could care for those in need. She received mystical revelations. She dictated her experiences in **The Book of the Experience of the Truly Faithful**. Pope Francis canonized Angela of Foligno in 2013.*

*Here are some of her thoughts:*

~To know oneself and to know God, that is the perfection of man; without this knowledge, visions and the greatest gifts are of no account.

~No one can be saved without divine light. Divine light causes us to begin and to make progress, and it leads us to the summit of perfection. Therefore, if you want to begin and to receive this divine light, pray. If you have begun to make progress and want this light to be intensified within you, pray. And if you have reached the summit of perfection, and want to be super-illumined so as to remain in that state, pray. If you want faith, pray. If you want hope, pray. If you want charity, pray. If you want poverty, pray. If you want obedience, pray. If you want chastity, pray. If you want humility, pray. If you want meekness, pray. If you want fortitude, pray. If you want any virtue, pray.

~This whole world is full of God!

~In that time and by God's will there died my mother, who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God; my husband died likewise, and in a short time there also died all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid way and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths, albeit I did also feel some grief.

~ God comes sometimes to the soul when it has neither called, nor prayed to, nor summoned Him. And He instils into the soul an unusual fire, a love and a sweetness, so that it delights and rejoices. So the soul feels that God is mingled with it and is a companion to it.



*Beatrice of Nazareth (1200-1268) was a Flemish Cistercian nun, a mystic and the author of **Seven Ways of Holy Love**, which describes the stages of love and its purification as it returns to God. At age seven, after her mother's death, Beatrice was sent to a Beguine community. Later she joined a Cistercian community where she had a number of mystical visions. In 1235, Beatrice's father decided to build a monastery, Nazareth, which was completed in 1245, when Beatrice became its first prioress, a position she held until her death.*

~And like the fish, swimming in the vast sea and resting in its deeps, and like the bird boldly mounting high in the sky, so the soul feels its spirit freely moving through the vastness and the depth and the unutterable richnesses of love.

~It happens sometimes that a sweet and joyful love is awakened in the heart and swells like a great wave through the soul by itself without any effort at all on our part. One is so powerfully moved by love, so passionately drawn up into love, so strongly taken by love, so tenderly embraced and utterly mastered by love that she surrenders herself entirely to its power. In this embrace the soul experiences directly the radiance of the Divine, a wonderful bliss, pure freedom, ecstatic sweetness, complete overpowering by love, a waterfall of ineffable delight. She feels that all her senses are sacred and she is so totally engulfed by love and so deeply immersed in love that she is one with love, and will never cease to be love. For the beauty of love has clothed her, the power of love has submerged her, the holiness of love has consumed her, the greatness of love has so sublimely drawn her into herself that she will always love and do nothing but acts of love.”



*Dhuoda of Uzès (c. 800-843), one of the earliest medieval women writers known:*

~But I, Dhuoda – lukewarm and lax, fragile and always tending toward the depths – fail to take pleasure in short prayer, much less in long prayer. Still, I have hope in *him* who permits the faithful to seek him.

***Olympia Morata (1526-1555), Italian poet and scholar:***

~Patience will make lighter what you cannot change. The best advice I can give you, if you can't bear adversities patiently, is to turn to Him who calls to himself all those who labor and are heavy laden, in order to give them rest. He cannot lie. He will strengthen and give you the promised Holy Spirit, so that you will be able to taste the heavenly goods which will undoubtedly mitigate your grief and quench your thirst for those things – for he who drinks that water will never thirst again.



***Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) Scottish Calvinist essayist, historian and philosopher:***

~Of a truth, men are mystically united: a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.

~Silence is as deep as eternity; speech is as shallow as Time.

~To reform a world, to reform a nation, no wise man will undertake; and all but foolish men know, that the only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what begins and perfects on himself.

~Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do* that with all thy might and leave the issues calmly to God

~ Every day that is born into the world comes like a burst of music and rings the whole day through, and you make of it a dance, a dirge, or a life march, as you will.

~The spiritual is the parent of the practical.



***Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was a journalist, author poet and short story writer:***

This matter of creeds is like horseflesh. The wise man knows horses are good – that there is a profit to be made from them all; and for myself I could believe the same of all the Faiths. Now manifestly a Kathiawar mare taken from the sands of her birthplace and moved to the west of Bengal founders [stumbles], nor is even a Balkh stallion of any account in the great Northern deserts beside the snow camels I have seen. Therefore, I say in my heart the Faiths are like the horses. Each has merit in its own country.

Be slow to judge for we know little of what has been done and nothing of what has been resisted.

The jungle speaks to me because I know how to listen.



**Margaret Mary Alacoque** (1647-1690) was a French Visitation nun and mystic:

~Keep your heart in peace and let nothing trouble you, not even your faults. You must humble yourself and amend them peacefully, without being discouraged or cast down, for God's dwelling is in peace.

~I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of God.

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**Edith Stein** (1891-1942) was a Carmelite nun of Jewish ancestry who died in Auschwitz:

And when night comes, and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been, and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed: just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him.

~The soul of woman must be expansive and open to all human beings, it must be quiet so that no small weak flame will be extinguished by stormy winds; warm so as not to benumb fragile buds... empty of itself, in order that extraneous life may have room in it; finally, mistress of itself and also of its body, so that the entire person is readily at the disposal of every call.

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**Rabia al Basri** (713-801) Sufi mystic and poet:

Your prayers are your light;

Your devotion is your strength;

Sleep is the enemy of both.

Your life is the only opportunity that life can give you.

If you ignore it, if you waste it,

You will only turn to dust.

