

We hear these texts today in the context of a world which seems to have no future – a truly apocalyptic scenario; as Greta Thurnberg recognises much of what we do at the level of conferences and political decision-making is a sham – it will not turn the world around. Something more is needed – an interior conversion which far from being yet a further removal from reality, a call to inaction, a sort of giving-up, is also, and at the same time, a call to be more completely grounded, to recognise our kinship with the soil as well as with one another. Something of this process of conversion is, I would suggest, what the Beatitudes are struggling to describe, as all language struggles to describe it, including our other texts for today from the always difficult Book of Revelation and the writings of St John. Hence, perhaps, the impossible nature of the task which is set before us. But, as it says in the Rule of St Benedict, *The beginning must needs be hard*. For what we are being asked to give up are our very selves in order that another may do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, another self one might say which we become or becomes us; indeed, becomes us in a way more fitting, more true, than any self we might have imagined. This is what I take ‘poverty of spirit’ to mean: a total surrender which turns into a total enrichment instead. An enrichment, not of our own making, and yet is made through a total engagement also with this world as it is. You’re hearing Teresa of Avila here again, at work among her pots and pans. It’s this sort of engagement with both God and the world which we celebrate today in all the saints who have gone before us and the many saints with us now.

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