**A Motley**

**Crew**

In our family, we have a plethora of dogs. All shapes, sizes and temperaments. It is a challenge, at times to have everyone gather in the same room or yard, to say the least. We have had to learn to adapt our schedules and our tempers to allow room for the dogs to be dogs with the least hurts possible.

When I look at our motley crew I am reminded that we as people are a lot more like these dogs than we like to admit. We each have our own personality and issue. We have histories that may make others wary. Some of us come on too strong while others are so afraid, they just want to sit waaay in the back where no one will notice. Others’ fearfulness can cause them to try and use their big powerful size to compensate for their inward fearfulness. Some of us like to bite a little too quickly and others of us are so little we just run as fast as we can to stay away from the teeth and the big feet!

Jesus had a motley crew – he called them disciples. They were 12 very different men – with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some were hard headed and strong willed, fishermen and tax collectors. Some had been part of a dangerous group of zealots hoping to over throw the government of Rome. Some-their backgrounds are unknown. If we add the others who became disciples as Jesus’ ministry progressed, we find wealthy women, a Pharisee who came for a midnight conference, a woman who had been delivered of demons, to name a few. All came with varying degrees of education or experience in being disciples. And yet, Jesus welcomed them all – even the one who would betray him.

I wonder sometimes what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like. It seems Jesus was not careful about who was welcomed to become a follower. He didn’t kick out his disciples when they had squabbles about who was the best or who would sit with him in glory. Jesus just continued to invite them to walk as he walked, talked and lived. He taught them and explained the parables, showed them prayer and healing, how to wash feet and go to his death. But he also showed them what the resurrection looked like too!

Jesus seems bent on having a motley crew as his church and we would do well to follow his example. No resumes needed – just a willingness to say “yes” to Jesus wherever he leads. Thankfully Jesus also taught his disciples and us how to forgive those who hurt us and to repent and seek forgiveness from those we hurt- even in the church. An important lesson whether you are dealing with dogs or humans!

Jesus prayed that all his disciples would be one, as he and the Father are one. For our motley crew called the church universal, to be one we must learn to humbly accept ourselves as that - a motley crew called by one leader Jesus the Christ with one love that surrounds, upholds and undergirds all that we are and do. As Pope Francis suggested this past week, maybe we need to add a few other beatitudes to the list Jesus gave to help us better navigate living with each other and our world. Here are his six additional beatitudes for your review. May God be glorified!

- “Blessed are those who remain faithful, while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.

- “Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalized and show them their closeness.

- “Blessed are those who see God in every person, and strive to make others also discover him.

- “Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home.

- “Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.

- “Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.” [[1]](#footnote-1)

1. <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2016/11/01/pope-francis-offers-new-beatitudes-saints-new-age/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)