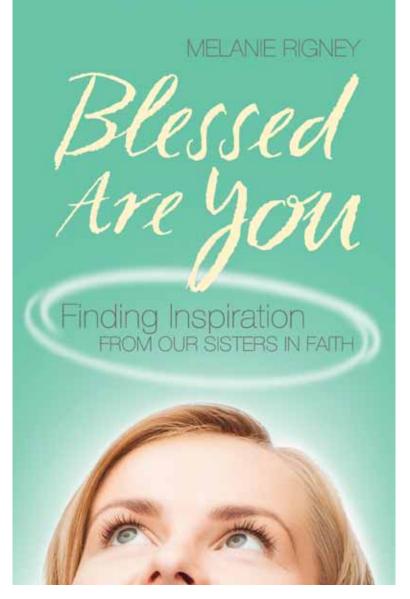
# **GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**



BLESSED ARE YOU Finding Inspiration from Our Sisters in Faith Melanie Rigney

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Getting Started: Use this Group Discussion Guide together with your copy of *Blessed Are You*. Either individually or as part of a group, discuss these questions; they are organized according to the chapters of the original book.

## Chapter 1 Spiritual Poverty

- "For God to fill us up, we must first empty ourselves of all the stuff that stands between him and us" (p. 2), Melanie Rigney writes. What sort of "stuff" separates you from God?
- Teenager Chiara Badano asked for twenty-five minutes alone when she learned of her bone cancer (p. 4). What challenge in your life might be eased by spending time in a one-on-one conversation with the Lord?
- 3. Of Germaine Cousin, who persevered with faith despite her stepmother's abuse, Rigney writes, "God was all she had, and he was so much that she had to share him." Does that seem a bit simplistic to you? Why would a loving God allow someone to remain in such a situation?

#### Chapter 2 Mourning

- This chapter opens with the question, "How can it be a blessing to mourn?" How would you answer that question?
- 2. In her review of the book, Sarah Vabulas ("Catholic Drinkie") says it "offers us the opportunity to view mourning as a deeper way to get to know the Lord and to better discern our calling from him." In what ways can mourning help us determine our vocation?
- 3. In what situations have you found more comfort in sharing your sorrow with family and friends

than in going solely to the Lord? Conversely, what should our response be when a loved one seems fixated on a tragedy years or even decades ago?

#### Chapter 3 Meekness

- 1. What terms or images come to mind for you when you hear the word "meek"?
- 2. In 2 Corinthians 10:1 (NRSVCE), Paul appeals to his audience "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." What does he mean by that?
- 3. "Meekness, though it rhymes with weakness, is anything but," writes Pat Gohn. "Meekness waits on God. Meekness trusts God implicitly. Meekness lets God lead." Do you agree with that statement?

#### Chapter 4 Righteousness

- The chapter opens (p. 50) with this statement: "There's nothing quite as annoying as a selfrighteousness Christian." Do you agree?
- 2. Lisa Hendey writes: "Ironically, I find that the more involved I become in the New Evangelization, the more 'at risk' I am of falling into little actions that lack integrity and have the chance to snowball into outright sins against righteousness." Which of your "little actions" put you at risk?
- 3. This chapter offers a somewhat unconventional view of Teresa of Avila as reformer, taking her order back to its roots. Is there a ministry or formation practice in your life that has strayed from its original faith focus? What can you do to help get back to the basics?

#### Chapter 5 Mercy

 Which do you find more challenging to offer: corporal works of mercy, in which we minister to meet tangible, earthly needs, or spiritual works, in which we counsel, advise, and forgive?

- Rigney writes (p.67), "There's no quid pro quo here through which we offer mercy and then the recipient cries and tells us what great Christians we are. Often, our offering will be ignored, scoffed at or denigrated." If our offer of mercy is rejected, what should we do next?
- Identify a situation in which you initially turned away the mercy of another, then later embraced it. What ripple effect did this create in your life?

## Chapter 6 Purity

- 1. The *Catechism* says purity of heart "enables us to see *according to* God, to accept others as 'neighbors.'" What does that mean to you?
- 2. Purity of heart "is about always trying to do what is right despite the fact that we are continually doing wrong," according to the Catholic Book Blogger. Do you agree with that statement? What is the point in trying if we will always fail?
- 3. The example of Maria Goretti (p. 89) in forgiving her murderer is particularly challenging for many of us. What can we do to have such utter confidence in God and his redemptive power?

#### Chapter 7 Peacemaking

- Blessed Oscar Romero said of peace "it is right and it is duty" (p. 97). In what way is peace our duty, and how do you go about accomplishing that in day to day life?
- 2. We have a variety of opportunities to be peacemakers. Blogger Pam Spano tells of a time she gave prayer cards to a coworker. When have you stepped out in faith as a peacemaker?
- The women in this chapter show some stunning examples of setting aside injustices and misunderstandings to advance peace in the

world, in one's family, and in oneself. What is the hardest place in your life to achieve peace?

#### Chapter 8 Persecution

- "In ways it never intended, persecution can be our friend" (p. 113), Rigney writes. In what situations has persecution proven to be a gift to you?
- 2. Standing up for what's right in the face of persecution can be difficult in the moment. Even when we fail, we can be strengthened. Consider Peter's three denials of Jesus... and his ultimate martyrdom for the faith. Discuss a situation in which you were galvanized after you succumbed to persecution for righteousness' sake or because of an attack on your belief?
- 3. Sara Salkahazi called on us to "have a desire for martyrdom" (p. 115). How would such a desire change the way you approach situations in which you may be mocked or harmed because of your faith?

#### Chapter 9 **Joy**

- 1. Do you agree that the Beatitudes are all the same (p. 129)? Why or why not?
- 2. What part of yourself that is displeasing to God is the most difficult to tackle? Consider this question in light of the seven deadly sins: sloth, envy, covetousness, pride, gluttony, lust, and anger.
- 3. The author concludes that God desires no less of each of us than the way the women in this book lived the Beatitudes. Which Beatitude do you find the most difficult to live? What resources could you tap to help?