

# The Glad Tidings of the Spirit

Fr. Steven Bell, CSP for the CBI Summer Bible Week Retreat - July 13, 2026

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Who are 'the poor' to whom these  
Glad Tidings are proclaimed?



# Anawim

The crushed, lowly ones still having a reliance on God but...

- **Overburdened by systemic pressures, political polarization, civic or societal despair.**
- **Normalizes worries, anxieties, shame, or self-reliance.**
- **Motivated by fear, power, or gain.**
- **Powered by anger, hurry, or grief.**
- **Has deep unattended or unaddressed pains or emptiness.**
- **Eroding sense of connection, meaningfulness or moral coherence.**



# The Captives

Those who reside in ideological or tribal echo chambers...trapped between competing absolutes that make it difficult to hold both faith and life together without fracturing.

- Too skeptical to allow for nuance.
- Mercy and love becomes judicious and conditional.
- Grace is second-guessed. The 'yeah-buts'.

# The Blind

Those who cannot see beyond the algorithm...whose whole culture is shaped by curated information.

- Makes judgments based on partial information.
- Relates more easily to pixels than to people.
- Maintains a narrow vision of morality.

# The Oppressed

Those sustaining moral injury by being involved in unjust systems that force them to act against their own values.

- Develops a deep sense of lasting guilt and shame.
- Fosters cynicism from their hopelessness.
- Disconnects from others as a means of self-preservation or protection.



## **Private Reflection Questions:**

Who are the anawim among you?  
What's the story of their poverty?

Where is the anawim within you?  
What's the story of your poverty?



What are the Glad Tidings we  
are anointed to proclaim?

# A Glad Tiding is a CounterNarrative

Making a proclamation of hope that is restorative and subversive.

- Proclamation about the inherent and intrinsic worth of human dignity.
- Proclamation about the truth of Christ's agape love that is unconditional, irrevocable, abundant, and sacrificial.
- Proclamation about the presence of God in communal hope, fervent prayer, and strength of faith.

# A Glad Tiding rebuilds via reminders.

Especially as other forces work to rewrite identities and stories.

- Reminding people of who they are as Children of God.
- Reminding people of their own witness and testimony of God's power at work in their lives.
- Reminding people that they are not alone or completely without power.



# A Glad Tidings inspires a reclaiming of Christ.

As it makes the space for intentional decisiveness.

- “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.” - Joshua 24:15
- Will you live empowered by your blessings or embattled by your burdens?

A Glad Tiding proclaims the strength of the Virtues.

As both the antiseptic and antidote of vices and evils.



**“JOY is the indestructible force that wraps my hand in Christ’s hand so firmly and securely that I am reassured that in Christ, I am connected, cared for, capable, and covered.”**

**- Fr. Steven Bell, CSP**

**“PEACE liberates me from the draw,  
discomfort, and distortion of dramas  
with enough space to for Christ to  
come in to revive my spirit, restore  
my assurances, recount my  
blessings, and revitalize my gifts and  
abilities.”**

**- Fr. Steven Bell, CSP**





***More than being nice and  
polite, KINDNESS is the  
sacred key that liberates our  
dignity from the socialized  
inequities that shackle us.***



Patience is a Holy Spirit breathing exercise that syncs my breath with the Breath of Christ which empowers my endurance and flexibility to bear the weight of trials and anxieties without regret and bitterness. Instead, I bear them with the grace that wholly trusts in God's timing and the posture that opens me to God's surprises.





## **Small Group Reflection Question:**

What might be a specific way that these Glad Tidings provide a 'counternarrative' that would be restorative for you or someone you know?



## Large Group Reflection Question:

As you reflect upon these Glad Tidings and how they are able to liberate the captive, restore sight to the blind, and free the oppressed, how might you better understand the theological virtue of Hope, not as optimism, but as God's providential grace, anchored in faith, propelled by joy, oriented in love, and active here and now amidst the problems of today?