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| **Beatitude Poor in Spirit**  **From a sermon on the Beatitudes by Saint Leo the Great** |

**Blessed are the poor in spirit**

There is no doubt that the poor find it easier than the rich to receive the blessing of humility; for gentleness goes with poverty just as pride more commonly goes with riches. Nevertheless, very many rich people find that their wealth does not swell them up with pride: rather, they do good and benevolent things with it. For these people the greatest treasure is what they spend in relieving the distress and hardship of others.

  In the virtue of humility men of every kind and every standing meet together, because though they differ in their means they share a common purpose. Their inequality of wealth makes no difference if they are equal in spiritual blessings.

  What kind of poverty, then, is blessed? The kind that is not in love with earthly things and does not seek worldly riches: the kind that longs to be filled with the blessings of heaven.

  After our Lord himself, the Apostles have given us the best example of this greatness of heart in poverty. When their Master called, they instantly left behind all that they possessed, and from catching fish they turned swiftly to fishing for men. Their example inspired many to emulate their faith and so become like them: it was at this time that these first sons of the Church were of one heart and there was one spirit among believers. With all their possessions stripped away they received the riches of eternal blessings, and through the Apostles’ preaching they rejoiced at having nothing that the world could give and possessing all things with Christ.

  So it was that when the blessed apostle Peter was going up into the Temple and the cripple begged him for alms, he replied *I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!* What could be higher than this lowliness? What could be richer than this poverty? He cannot give the support of money but he can give the gift of a restored nature. From the womb his mother brought him forth a cripple; by a word Peter raises him up to health. He did not give the image of Caesar stamped on a coin but he restored the image of Christ in the man himself.

  The man who was given the power to walk was not the only one to receive help from this rich treasure. From the same act of miraculous healing five thousand men received the gift of faith in the Apostle’s teaching. The poor man who could give nothing of what he was asked for restored one lame man to his feet but also healed the hearts of thousands: he found them lame and brought them to be lithe and agile in Christ.

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| **Responsory** |  |

**℟.** The disciples came to Jesus, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:*\** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**℣.** This is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*\** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.