

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

MARCH 2026

Morning Devotions on the Monday of the 1st week of Lent

Opening Prayer:

Lord, for Thy tender mercies' sake, lay not our sins to our charge, but forgive that is past and give us grace to amend our lives; to decline from sin and incline to virtue, that we may walk with a perfect heart before thee, now and evermore. Amen.

Lenten Reading: from *The Paradise of the Soul: Forty-Two Virtues to Reach Heaven*
by Albert the Great (1200-1280)

FIFTH VIRTUE: Poverty of Spirit

(first four: Love, Humility, Obedience, Patience)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:3)

Poverty is certainly not an aspiration for anyone; quite to the contrary, our culture makes wealth a primary goal in life. But there is a real tendency as one becomes wealthier, need for God subsides. Wealth and God conflict with one another because they have opposing standards for fulfillment and because each requires one's full attention. As Jesus taught, '*You cannot have two masters*' (Matthew 6:24). Impoverished people tend to have greater faith because they have only God to depend upon. This I learned in my visit to Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. The core of the virtue Jesus opened the Sermon on the Mount with was a spirit within us which held devotion to God as the only aspiration in life. Francis of Assisi, who came from wealthy parents, divested himself of everything he had, even the very clothes on his back that he may have only God in his life. That was the meaning of his poverty, not that he was poor but that only God was valuable to him.

Considerations of spiritual poverty:

1. *For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9).*
So who's life is 'richer' because I am 'poorer'?
2. Financial advisors are sought to take care of the resources we have accumulated so that we feel secure. Truth be told, financial advisors can only help us be good stewards of our God given resources, but our security must always be found in the love of God who *gives us this day our daily bread*. Consider further Matthew 6:25-33.
3. When time is no more, this truth will be the result,
He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:53)

Closing Prayer:

Lord, impart to me a disdain for all passing things so that I may cling more firmly to the treasures which are eternal.

With love,

