

# SPIRITUAL READING



*“Taken from a sermon of Pope St. Leo the Great”*



It is certain that the poor more easily achieve the blessing of humility than the rich.

Gentleness goes with poverty, pride more commonly with riches. And yet, very many rich people do use their wealth for works of charity rather than as means to puff their pride. The spirit counts as among its greatest profits what it spends in relieving distress and hardship in others.

In this virtue all classes and conditions of men meet, for they can share a common purpose while differing in wealth. It does not matter how unequal they are in earthly possessions when they are seen to be equal in spiritual blessings. Poverty is blessed, then, when it is not beguiled by a longing for earthly goods and does not seek increase of the world's riches, but desires to be enriched with heavenly blessings.

Next to our Lord, the apostles were foremost in giving us an example of this noble poverty. They left all of their possessions at once at the call of their heavenly Master. By a sudden conversion they were changed from fishermen to fishers of men, and they induced many others to follow their example by imitating their faith, at the time when all of those original sons of the Church were of one heart and there was one mind among believers. Dividing all of their goods and possessions, they were enriched with external blessings through their generous poverty. Following the apostles' preaching they rejoiced in having nothing from this world and possessing all things with Christ.

So the blessed apostle Peter said, when he was asked for alms by the lame man as he was entering the temple. "Silver and gold I have none, but what I have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk." What could be more sublime than this humility, what richer than this poverty? He does not have resources of money, but he has gifts of nature. By his word Peter heals the man whom his mother bore disabled. He had not Caesar's image on a coin, but he restored the image of Christ in that man.

The man who was restored to health was not the only one to profit from the riches of his treasure. There were five thousand men too who found faith at the apostles' word because of that miraculous cure. The poor man who had nothing to give to the beggar gave divine grace in abundance – he healed a cripple's feet and he brought thousands of believers soundness of heart, those of whom he found lame he made agile in Christ