

Homily Lent 1
February 20-21 2021
Riches Hidden in Christ

Introduction:

This Latin phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi*, which reflects a deep understanding of Catholic prayer and faith, was first coined by Prosper of Aquitaine in the 5th century in these words:

the law of prayer is the law of faith,” or “the Church believes as she prays.”

It can be explained or described in any number of other ways, too:

- the law of prayer becomes the law of belief.
- it is in the manner of our prayer that we are formed in the manner of our beliefs;
- how we pray shapes how we believe;
- the structure of our prayer shapes the structure of our beliefs;
- the line or pathway by which we pray becomes the line or pathway that we believe.
- let the rule of belief determine the rule of prayer

This understanding has shaped the church’s approach to the liturgy, especially since the Second Vatican Council initiated the liturgical renewal, and this understanding continues to shape our liturgical life. How we pray matters.

Collect for 1st Sunday Lent:

*Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.*

1. *Yearly Observance:* Liturgical Year helps to govern our lives, what we do in our bodies.
2. *Holy Lent:* Holy means to be set apart. (Alms Giving, Prayer and Fasting)
3. *Grow in our understanding:* Use of our mind in important
4. *Riches hidden in Christ* – Treasure is never easily attained. It has to be mined
5. *Law of prayer influences our faith (what we believe and understand) so that we can then live in a way being able to appropriate in our lives the riches hidden in Christ.*

Think of the example of mining gold. You don’t mine just for the sake of mining but to then use the gold to good effect.

We are going to know mine the readings for today so that in understanding them we may discover their riches so that they influence of inform our conduct:

1. Through the observance of a Holy Lent: We have been set apart in our baptism.

Passage from 1st Peter teaches this. Noah was set apart and entered into a covenant relationship with God. A promise was given to him: That never again would the earth be judged by a universal flood. Now instead of universal judgment there is the sign of universal salvation as represented by the spectrum of colours in the rainbow. All of the colours are included in the bow.

Notice what Peter's does in the passage we read today. He begins by referring to how God's Promise to Noah will be fulfilled. Rather than the world being judged, the Son of God will take into himself the universal judgment:

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God!

Here Peter refers to the passion of Jesus, which will be the culmination of our Lenten Journey. The holy one Jesus, makes the unholy ones, that is you and me righteous in order to bring us to God. How does this happen? Through Baptism:

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²

What does it mean to be saved? It means to be brought to God. In the Sacrament of Baptism we are truly saved – but notice that something more is mentioned, that is the effect of the sacrament. It is the appeal to God for a good conscience. In other words we want to grow in our understanding of what our baptism means. And as we choose to do this in a purposeful and intentional way the Holy Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead will be at work in our lives enabling us to live as little Christs:

Prayer at the Anointing with Chrism

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism we have been made into a holy people and so we are to observe a Holy Lent.

2. That we may grow in our understanding:

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Pe 3:18). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Pe 3:21). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

The prayer of Anointing with Holy Chrism affirms that we are now members of the body of Christ. And just as Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil so same things happens to us:

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

Wilderness is representative of the world in which we live. Think about it this way. After baptism, after every time you come to the Eucharist or receive the Sacrament of reconciliation or any other sacrament, you then go back into the world, where as the text goes on to say:

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;

This is John Justice Landsberg. He was a 16th-century Catholic spiritual writer:

From this episode our first lesson is that human life on earth is a life of warfare, and the first thing Christians must expect is to be tempted by the devil. As Scripture tells us, we have to be prepared for temptation, for it is written: “When you enter God’s service, prepare your soul for an ordeal” (Sirach 2:1).

For this reason the Lord desires the newly baptized and recent converts to find comfort in his own example. Reading in the gospel that Christ too was tempted by the devil immediately after he was baptized, they will not grown fainthearted and fearful if they experience keener temptations from the devil after their conversion than before...

The second lesson Christ desires to impress upon us by his own example is that we should not lightly expose ourselves to temptation, for we read that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness. Mindful of our frailty rather, we must be on the watch, praying not to be put to the test, and keeping ourselves clear of every occasion to temptation.

*and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*³

Babylonian Talmud, in the tractate called Sanhedrin, paragraph 59 folio 59B, it tells us that one of the Rabbis said there was an ancient Jewish tradition that when Adam was in the garden of Eden, there were “ministering angels” that served him. They would actually prepare his food and drink and give it to him. So if that's what's being alluded to here in Mark 1, what Mark appears to be suggesting is that at the end of the 40 days, Jesus was fed by the angels.

May the law of prayer so shape how we believe this Lent so that by worthy conduct we may discover how the riches hidden in Christ inspire us to greater holiness as we observe a Holy Lent.

³ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Mk 1:13). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

3. *of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.*

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”⁴

- Bible in a year: Fr Mike
- The Right ordering of our lives
- The ministering of the angels in our lives

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Mk 1:14–15). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.