

**Our Collect this morning reads:**

- 1) O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee;**
  - 2) and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do,**
  - 3) and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same;**
- through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Let us examine these words more deeply; for its truth is of utmost importance to our lives and to our souls.

We know that we, this morning, are in the presence of Jesus, for he tells us:

Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

It is through this fellowship that we draw strength to stand against Satan, and his power, and this secular world in which we live.

Together (and as Jesus says “in my name”) is the same place that **the Church** has stood for over two thousand years.

From martyrs’ to the saints of God – the name of Jesus has been their guiding light.

It is through this union of one with another, and **THE BODY’S** union with Christ, that establishes His rule throughout the world and within our hearts.

The Collect continues:

2) “and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do”

Here is the part that so many of our brothers and sisters have such great difficulty.

Let us look to scripture for warnings and guidance:

Jesus warns us:

Mat 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

In Luke 21:8 we are warned: “Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;

and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them”

So how can we discriminate between Christ and the world – well one way is to see their works:

Mat 18:5: And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name **receiveth me**.

So by receiving the word and how impacts our treating of others is one way, but there is danger there as well.

The Epistle from Paul to the Ephesians: chapter iii, tells us that

God has made known, **by the church**, the manifold wisdom of God – and are now made known the **“unsearchable riches”** of Christ...

OK, now stay with me for this is critical (and yet seems hid from so many:)

The word UNSERACHABLE comes from the Greek word: Anexichniastos  
Pronunciation (**ä-ne-ksēkh-/nē'-ä-stos**)

This is an adjective meaning:

“that (which) cannot be searched out,

**“that (which) cannot be comprehended”**

AND RICHES, as used in unsearchable riches...

Comes from the Greek word Ploutos / Pronunciation plü'-tos (Key)  
pronounced (**Plu toss**)

which means a “fulness, abundance, plenitude - with which one is enriched”

So, Paul is telling us that we see what **God has made known**

that which **“cannot be comprehended”** and has enriched us,

**through His Church,**

**of an abundance of riches** (of knowledge to direct our lives.)

The unknowable is now made knowable **“through His Church.”**

Not through man’s mind, not through his reasoning, nor his intellect.

But through “Christ’s **CHURCH.**”

Let us not stop here...

The proclamation of the gospel was not only with words, but also with the illumination of our eyes.

The Gospel instructs in a manner that we may see with our eyes this Good News,

which has to be accepted by faith, and Jesus show us how this knowledge was to operate in the hearts and lives of men.

Not only must the mystery of the unsearchable riches of Christ be set forth,

(for the mystery is great and marvelous because it reveals Salvation.)

But we are shown as well how the mystery actually works,

replacing fear with trust, gloom by gladness, hatred by love.

As Christians we must replace fear with trust – this comes through faith.

We must replace gloom with gladness – this comes through hope.

We must replace hatred with love – this comes through Charity – (which means Love.)

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY...

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Now, I want to discuss a “separation of fellowship within the Body.”

As we now come to the last part of the Collect:

3) **“and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same;”**

“Grace and power” – let me start by stating something that is so true:

It may seem harsh and cruel but I find it so true...as this comes from Me as your Rector and from my heart:

Those who pull away from, who separate themselves, from Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

are making themselves and their families vulnerable

to the many heresies that can do harm to their souls.

This hurts me to see and is why we must always have open arms to those who return.

By not separating ourselves and having fellowship within the Church we promote the good condition (that Good Ground) of which we read in Luk 8:15:

“the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it,

and bring forth fruit with patience,

Heard the word, (and) kept it ...

ouch that is so very difficult because it is often going against our will and desire – our “happiness and Joy”.

And yet Titus is warned of such as he is told:

**Tit 1:16** They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Let no one lead you astray by brethren:

It is only by being within the fellowship of His Church that we can receive the Sacraments which are the Church's means of the distribution of God's Grace which gives us the power to renew our faith.

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It was The Church in 325AD that established The Nicene Creed, and it was acknowledged then and is now by His whole Church, (although heresies would continue)

and it was the same Church which universally confirmed (at the Council of Ephesus) the Canon of Scripture which we know as the New Testament.

You see, it was the Church through the working of the Holy Ghost that proclaimed the Christian Faith to the world,

and then it was that same Church that canonized the Scripture.

There is great danger if we stray away, if we separate ourselves from His Church and pursue a "new god."

And yet some do and follow after doctrines that make them feel good as they often follow a Christian Faith

that is not according to its two thousand years of defining itself.

It is as if any handwriting on the wall that makes them feel good will work...

If we do then we must also be aware that

"The handwriting on the wall may be a forgery"

...just because someone in the pulpit, or on the radio or TV, or on the corner says one thing or another,

the true validation of their words can only come from His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

(which is His One Historical and Traditional Church.)

This is the one authority that has established the faith for over 2000 years.

Any other is not the truth and it is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, that tells us we are to worship in spirit and truth.

My fellow Christians, St. Michael's is a Church of Christ...its root go back to the Apostle's and the early Church Fathers.

Relax, enjoy His Beauty, His Peace, and His Holiness, and His Sacraments.

Be one within His name...

During this Epiphany Season, go show forth, as in the words of Saint Matthew, **5:16**

**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**