

Sunday Message

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 25 September 2022 • Psalter Week 2

TO SEE LAZARUS AT THE GATE

LUKE 16:19-31



In Tacloban city in the Philippines stands a mansion, cut off from the public, that once belonged to the family of Imelda Marcos, wife of dictator President Ferdinand Marcos.

After Marcos was overthrown in 1986, the new government opened the house up as a tourist attraction. I visited it soon afterwards. Surrounded by high walls, it was lavishly decorated, with fine furnishings, shimmering swimming pool and every imaginable luxury.

Several things about it were unsettling. First, it was located on a city street surrounded by ordinary houses and people struggling to survive. The contrast was stark.

Second was the pristine hill that stood behind the house. It had once been full of ramshackle dwellings, but Imelda's family had them bulldozed so they wouldn't spoil the view from the mansion. They didn't want to see the shacks of the poor. Out of sight, out of mind.

It wasn't quite like that with the rich man and Lazarus. After all, Imelda's family physically removed the poor from their line of vision. But the rich man did nothing like that. He didn't have Lazarus physically removed from his gate so he wouldn't have to see him. He didn't inflict the sores on Lazarus' body. He didn't harm Lazarus in any way. Yet the rich man is condemned.

Then the reason becomes clear. The rich man is condemned not for what he did but for what he didn't do. He ignored the poor man at his gate. He didn't think Lazarus was his responsibility. He saw his suffering and did nothing about it. He was guilty not of the sin of commission but omission.

Every time we pray the Confiteor at Mass, we ask forgiveness for "what I have done and... what I have failed to do". We ask forgiveness for our sins of omission as well as commission. We must always be aware of both. ■

DO

Join a group or organisation that campaigns for justice.

Look at your parish, your neighbourhood. Who is Lazarus at the gate you need to be aware of?

SAY

Lord, give me a heart like yours. Never let me be blind to those who suffer or are oppressed. Amen.

LEARN

The Christian is concerned for the welfare of others.

There is no such thing as a "private" Christian.

Concern for justice is an integral part of the Gospel.

We are called to be a "poor Church for the poor".

REFLECT

Today's Gospel challenges us on three levels – as Church, society, and individuals.

First, as Church. Days after his election, Pope Francis spoke about the Church he longed to see. "How I would like a poor Church for the poor!" he said. Time and again, Francis has said he wants a commitment to those who are poor to be at the heart of the Church's role in the world. A Church that goes out to the margins where the voiceless are and is not interested in wealth or prestige but only in service. A Church always aware of Lazarus at the gate, a Church committed to the work of justice.

Second, it challenges us to think about the society we live in. This is what Pope Francis says about what he calls the culture of comfort in the West:

"The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalisation of indifference. In this globalised world, we have fallen into globalised indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn't affect me; it doesn't concern me; it's none of my business!"

Words to think about as so many struggle to cope with rampant inflation and the gap between the wealthiest one per cent and the world's poor grows larger than at any time in history.

Third, it challenges our behaviour as individuals. Do I see a need and ignore it? A problem and step over it? Do I see injustice and shrug my shoulders? Heartbreak and desperation and do nothing to alleviate it? Do I see in my suffering brothers and sisters the face of Christ?

Today's Gospel is a cry against indifference, a challenge to shake off whatever complacency, blindness or smugness has taken over our lives. Because the world is crowded with Lazaruses and we will be judged not just on what we do but on what we fail to do. ■

PRAY

So many people are suffering or in need. Pray for them.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

All that you have done to us, O Lord,
you have done with true judgement,
for we have sinned against you
and not obeyed your commandments.
But give glory to your name
and deal with us according to the bounty of
your mercy.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon
us
and make those hastening to attain your
promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.
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.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Amos 6:1. 4-7

A reading from the prophet Amos.

The almighty Lord says this:

Woe to those ensconced so snugly in Zion
and those who feel so safe on the
mountain of Samaria.
Lying on ivory beds
and sprawling on their divans,
they dine on lambs from the flock,
and stall-fattened veal;
they bawl to the sound of the harp,
they invent new instruments of music like
David,
they drink wine by the bowlful,
and use the finest oil for anointing
themselves,
but about the ruin of Joseph they do not
care at all.
That is why they will be the first to be
exiled;
the sprawlers' revelry is over.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 145

Response:

My soul, give praise to the Lord.

or

Alleluia!

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. (R.)
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed
down.
It is the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger. (R.)
3. He upholds the widow and orphan
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Timothy 6:11-16

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to
Timothy.

As a man dedicated to God, you must aim to
be saintly and religious, filled with faith and
love, patient and gentle. Fight the good fight
of the faith and win for yourself the eternal
life to which you were called when you made
your profession and spoke up for the truth in
front of many witnesses. Now, before God
the source of all life and before Jesus Christ,
who spoke up as a witness for the truth in
front of Pontius Pilate, I put to you the duty
of doing all that you have been told, with no
faults or failures, until the Appearing of our
Lord Jesus Christ,

who at the due time will be revealed
by God, the blessed and only Ruler of all,
the King of kings and the Lord of lords,
who alone is immortal,
whose home is in inaccessible light,
whom no man has seen and no man is
able to see:
to him be honour and everlasting power.
Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The sheep that belong to me listen to my
voice,

says the Lord,

I know them and they follow me.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 16:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a
rich man who used to dress in purple and
fine linen and feast magnificently every day.
And at his gate there lay a poor man called
Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to
fill himself with the scraps that fell from the
rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked
his sores. Now the poor man died and was
carried away by the angels to the bosom of
Abraham. The rich man also died and was
buried.

"In his torment in Hades he looked up and
saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in
his bosom. So he cried out, 'Father Abraham,
pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his

finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am
in agony in these flames.' 'My son,' Abraham
replied 'remember that during your life good
things came your way, just as bad things
came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being
comforted here while you are in agony. But
that is not all: between us and you a great
gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he
wanted to, crossing from our side to yours,
and to stop any crossing from your side to
ours.'

"The rich man replied, 'Father, I beg you
then to send Lazarus to my father's house,
since I have five brothers, to give them
warning so that they do not come to this
place of torment too.' 'They have Moses
and the prophets,' said Abraham 'let them
listen to them.' 'Ah no, father Abraham,'
said the rich man 'but if someone comes to
them from the dead, they will repent.' Then
Abraham said to him, 'If they will not listen
either to Moses or to the prophets, they will
not be convinced even if someone should
rise from the dead.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O merciful God,
that this our offering may find acceptance
with you
and that through it the wellspring of all
blessing
may be laid open before us.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Remember your word to your servant,
O Lord,
by which you have given me hope.
This is my comfort when I am brought low.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord,
restore us in mind and body,
that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ,
to whose suffering we are united
whenever we proclaim his Death.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.