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26th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 25 September 2022

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25 September 2022

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Tony Doran

Introduction

The great reversal is one of the constant themes of Luke's Gospel. We hear a particularly poignant example in Lazarus and the rich man in today's Gospel. All our readings underline the theme that our actions must match our words in the Christian life. On this World Migrant and Refugee Sunday, we need to hear the gospel with particular clarity for our own political climate of exclusion and rejection of the poorest people in the world.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you call us to repentance.
Lord, have mercy.

You lift up the poor.
Christ, have mercy.

You call us all to act justly.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

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.

The meaning of this prayer flows from the implications of the opening clause: God is so powerful that even pardon and mercy are possible. The divine acts of pardon and mercy connote the whole economy of God's love in Christ for sinful humanity. They express the Christian community's experiences of the defeat of death and sin, and

our restoration and preservation, experiences which are the foretaste and promise of eternal life. The verb 'manifest' further points to the transformative, disclosive power of this revelation in Christ of pardon and mercy amongst sinners. For the believer, this manifestation is the foremost expression of God's power. Our own experience of God's merciful pardon raises in us the desire to eagerly seek the fullness which God's love promises. Consequently, we run and strive for the promises, exhibiting an enthusiastic and loving obedience to God's mandates and worship. The end result of this course is a sharing in the immutable good things of eternal life, including the complete revelation of that divine love, whose power is most clearly shown on earth in its mercy and pardon. Theologically, it is hard to go past the opening description of the power of God: it is shown forth in pardon and mercy! And it was a favourite collect of Thomas Aquinas for that very reason. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

Amos 6:1. 4-7

In this reading, Amos castigates the inhabitants of the northern Kingdom of Israel for their empty religious ritual. They might praise God in elaborate and solemn assemblies, but they neglect justice and righteousness.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145:6-10. R. v. 2

Praise the Lord, my soul!

This psalm is a hymn of praise for God's mighty acts of salvation. And we see this salvation in giving justice to the oppressed, bread to the hungry and setting prisoners free.

Second Reading

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Paul's advice for the young bishop Timothy is good advice for all who seek to follow the path of discipleship: be filled with faith and love, gentleness and patience, stand up for the truth.

Gospel Reading

Luke 16:19-31

Like many of Luke's parables, the story of the rich man and Lazarus is well known, inspiring artists and composers to depict the story in music and art. Today's reading continues a favourite Lucan theme: a concern for the 'little ones' who are found on the margins. This reading also picks up another of Luke's favourite themes, that of

the great reversal, this time in the fortunes of the two men when they are carried to the bosom of Abraham.

Reflection

Dogs even came and licked his sores...

There can hardly be a sadder or more miserable picture painted than the one painted by Luke in today's Gospel.

Jesus, in response to the Pharisees who are described as loving money, tells the parable we hear today. First there is the rich man who used to 'feast magnificently every day.' And we know that the man in this parable truly is rich for purple and fine linen could only be afforded by the very, very wealthy.

And then there is Lazarus.

The poor man, covered with sores, who could have feasted on the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. And then finally the poor man died and was taken to the 'bosom of Abraham' – the symbolic name for the Paradise all good Jewish people longed for. After his life of poverty and suffering, Lazarus goes to his eternal reward. And the rich man ends up in torment in Hades.

The rich man's sin was not so much that he was wealthy. His sin was not really even that he failed to use his resources wisely - although instead of spending all of his money on fine food and rich clothes, he could have spent some on Lazarus starving at his gate. His sin was that even though he had the teaching of Moses and the prophets to guide him, he failed to take these to heart. He had become complacent, and his riches had blinded him to hearing and living the Word of God.

The same situation is being addressed in today's First Reading. The prophet Amos is castigating the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The sin of the Israelites was not that they were wealthy, but that their wealth hindered them from hearing and living the Word of God.

And just like the people of Israel to whom Amos was speaking, we can lie on our beds and eat and drink, and not care about our exile. Too easily, we can believe that our judgement will only happen at the end of time, and that what we do here and now is of little consequence. But, if we are judged at the end of time, surely, we are also judged by our actions while we are still here. Today's readings tell us just that.

In the Gospel, the rich man, after a life of plenty, died and ended in torment. And, after seeing Lazarus in heaven with Abraham, the rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers. Abraham refused – telling the rich man that his brothers have the two great pillars of Jewish faith – Moses and the prophets – as warning enough of what could befall them. The rich man bargained with Abraham: 'But if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 'No', says Abraham, 'if Moses and the prophets made no impression, neither will someone rising from the dead.' And just as this was the message that Jesus gave the Pharisees, this is also what Jesus is telling us. We have the one who has risen from the dead – Jesus Christ himself.

And, too often, we fail to hear his message. We become too complacent, we become

too comfortable. And this is the great sin. Because by the time we get to the judgement seat of God, it will be too late – the gulf is too wide and there is no crossing over.

The challenge for us, as Christians in today's world, is not only to hear the Word of God, but to act on it, before it is too late. The words which St Paul addresses to the young bishop Timothy, which we heard in the second reading, could well be addressed to us. It is not enough to simply hear the Word of God. We must be people not only filled with faith and love, but we must also act on that faith and love. And when we act as faith-filled and love-filled people, the Lazaruses of our world, who are sitting at our gates, are fed and there is no danger that we will be eating and drinking and forgetting about exile.

And this is what the Kingdom of God is all about. One of the great themes of Luke's Gospel is the in-break of the Kingdom into this world. And in the Kingdom, the rich are sent away empty while the poor are fed. The mighty are cast from their thrones, while the lowly are raised up. Lazarus is in the bosom of Abraham, the rich man in torment in Hades.

We cannot wait until the final judgement. We must put into practice now the faith which we profess today.



Lk 16:21

**Lazarus longed
for the scraps
from the table.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist declares that it is the Lord who is just to those who are oppressed. On this World Migrant and Refugee Sunday, let us pray in faith for the needs of our world and ourselves.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our church, particularly Pope Francis, and all religious leaders that they will work together and be prophetic for the millions of refugees and migrants around the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of nations and corporations that they will listen to the prophetic wisdom of those who advocate for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. May they respect the human rights and dignity of all people irrespective of their origins and whether they are political or climate change refugees and migrants.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered here in prayer that we will not pass by the Lazaruses of this world and leave them in their poverty, but that we will work with our own resources to make the world a better place for all people.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have died trying to escape injustice, violence and poverty. May they reach that heavenly place and be embraced as Lazarus was by Abraham.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have become sick because of the damage done to economies and environments around the world. May they be supported by people who care about their lives and by others who can give to support charitable organisations that can make a real difference in the lives of the poor.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those suffering in our own community through ill health, poverty or injustice, particularly those in our prisons. May we be forever alert to the poor, and sensitive to their needs.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of justice, we offer these prayers and those unspoken in our hearts, knowing that in your infinite mercy and compassion, they will be heard. We ask this through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	GA	CWB	CWBII
All people that on earth do dwell	25			533	613	448
Be thou my vision	9				733	455
Come down, O love divine	118			375	653	381
Come to the water (Andersen)	74					473
Come to the water (Foley)				403		
Festival Canticle: Worthy is Christ						371
For the healing of the nations				513		
God, whose purpose is to kindle						500
I want to walk as a child of the light						514
Jesus Christ, you are my life						523
Jesus' prayer for the Church					726	
Lord, be my vision					733	
Lord, whose love in humble service					741	551
O God, beyond all praising						566
O Jesus, joy of loving hearts						576
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	78				789	588
Praise the Lord, you heavens adore him				409	790	583
Table of plenty		20				
The Church of Christ in every age					818	613
The cry of the poor	83			36		618
The voice of God				476	835	621
Touch the earth lightly			34			631
We want to live like you Jesus			32			
Whatsoever you do					860	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 145: *Praise the Lord, my soul!//Alleluia!*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 145	416	83	pg. 96		pg. 150	