

THE HOMILY FOR THE 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C. 9-28TH 2025

Readings. Amos 6:1, 4-7. 1Timothy 6:11-16. Luke16:19-31

Our Theme this weekend is: SEEKING AND CRAVING FOR THE GIFT OF SALVATION AMIDST THE DISTRACTIONS OF THIS WORLD.

Dear beloved of God,

Today's first reading and the Gospel are giving us a powerful message we cannot afford to ignore. Prophet Amos is technically called the prophet of social justice. He made his observation and found out that something wrong was going on and something important was missing. I believe we are all familiar with the parable of poor Lazarus and the rich man, which is set in a dramatic way with clear images and pictures. But what does all this teach us, we Christians of today. It is about our material possessions, our responsibilities towards one another and the practice of our faith. Much more, it is about the eternal gift of heaven and the eternal damnation of pain and suffering. Jesus does not intend to scare us but it is a wake-up call with regard to what matters in life.

Seven weeks ago, on the 18th Sunday of ordinary time, we heard from the Gospel of St. Luke 12:13-21 an important lesson about the potential danger of being possessed by what we have worked for and accumulated. Jesus gave a parable of a rich man whose land produced a rich harvest. Instead of using what he had acquired he planned an early retirement whereby he would build bigger stores for his produce; would have enough time to rest, eat, drink, and be merry. But God told him, **"You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you, and the things you have prepared to whom will they belong"**.

Today, in the readings we get a picture of many fools, not one. We have the audience of prophet Amos who behaved exactly like that rich man. Theirs was not just fun but excessive wickedness, because they thought they didn't need anything else other than their wealth. Amos pronounced judgement over them, that they would be taken into exile, and would lose everything they were indulging themselves in. This happened when the Assyrians invaded the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel and took many people into slavery, and Samaria, their Capital city was completely destroyed in the year 722 BC. Another fool is the one mentioned in today's Gospel. He is a Richman without a name. This rich man could be anyone of us. The world has many of them.

Another important figure is poor Lazarus. In Hebrew, Lazarus is translated as Eleazar, which means, 'God is my help or God has helped'. The Richman was condemned not because of his riches, but because in relation with poor Lazarus, he was very indifferent, he ignored Lazarus who was in most need, sick and hungry. He thought his riches meant everything to him. Here comes the great lesson for all of us in our today's world. How serious do we treasure the greatest gift of heaven and behave accordingly to avoid eternal damnation? In ancient Israel, this parable might have sounded awkward and shocked many of Jesus's audience who believed that riches were signs of God's blessings and favor upon a person, while being poor was a sign of being cursed by God.

Don't be surprised when you hear that some people in this world still have this narrow understanding regarding God's blessings. God blesses all people in different ways. Both rich and poor alike are God's Children. For us Christian believers, we affirm that there are many blessings God

has bestowed upon us-being alive, being a believer, having the knowledge of God, having a family, and many more blessings.

At the end of our life, before the judgment seat of God, God will ask us what did you do on earth? How did you witness that you know me? How did you serve me in my poor people; especially the many Lazarus who crossed your path? Since time immemorial, Christian charity has been part of our life of discipleship. Jesus puts a lot of emphasis on the practice of Charity towards one another. It is faith in action as St. James tells us-(James 2:14-26). Let's not ignore Jesus' teaching about helping the least of His people as narrated in Matthew 25:31-46. It is very important that we recapitulate this teaching with the traditional hymn that springs from this Gospel verses: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me...". Somewhere, there is someone who needs you; respond in faith according to your means. AMEN.

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