

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C) - 2025

An old man gets an urgent phone call from his wife while driving home. "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the freeway. Please be careful!" Herman replied, "Dear, it's not just one car. There are hundreds of them!"

If you are like me, you probably can't stand it when people **lack a sense of urgency; when they** seem to be **utterly oblivious** about things that might demand their attention.

In a certain sense, all three of our readings today address the problem of complacency—at least when it comes to our **spiritual**, moral, and faith lives.

In the First Reading from Amos, the prophet speaks emphatically: **“Woe to the complacent in Zion!”**

Some people in the community had evidently become too content with their own comfort and pleasures, neglecting their responsibilities to the less fortunate among them.

It was as if their **faith was put on the back burner when times were good**, when their needs and wants were being fulfilled. Suddenly, they no longer needed God as much or weren't as concerned about helping their neighbors.

And in the Second Reading from Paul's First Letter to Timothy, he reminds him to **"Compete well for the faith."**

Paul wanted Timothy to maintain a sense of urgency in both **living and preaching** the Gospel.

For Paul, there was **no time to waste**. Faith demanded a total effort, a sort of persistence, dedication, and relentlessness. Paul believed that **Jesus deserved our very best**, not a lukewarm or half-hearted response.

And in the Gospel passage from Luke, we heard one of the most sobering stories in all of Scripture—one in which a wealthy man dies and is **tormented in the netherworld**.

In contrast, the **man he ignored**, the man he was indifferent to, the man who was invisible to him, dies, as well, and is **carried by angels to the bosom of Abraham**.

I've always found today's parable to be one of the most sobering and startling teachings of Jesus.

The Rich Man loses his salvation not because of anything he did, but because of what he failed to do.

It's not as if he stole Lazarus' money, or that he kicked him as he walked through the gate each day. He ignored him and took no action. Lazarus was not his problem.

It was one of those sins of omission, which we mention in the Penitential Rite at each Mass. "I have greatly sinned...in my thoughts, and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do."

Complacency is a trait we often dislike seeing in others, but it is one we frequently excuse ourselves.

- I'll get around to this "discipleship thing" **eventually**.
- I'll be a better person **tomorrow** or the next day or the next.
- **Somebody else** will take care of it. Why should I get involved?
- That problem is **too big**. I couldn't possibly make a difference.
- I'm tired. I worked hard **enough**. Let someone else take over.

Our weekly participation in the Eucharist, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is necessary if we are to acquire the spiritual vision to see clearly the image of God in our brothers and sisters and to have the loving heart that doesn't hold back from helping them, even though it will almost inevitably be inconvenient or uncomfortable to do so.

I think St. Mother Teresa put it best. When asked how she was able to serve the poorest of the poor, she said, “If I weren’t able to discover Jesus hidden under the disguise of bread and wine, I wouldn’t be able to find Him in the distressing disguise of the poor.”

Let’s pray for this grace, that if we’re able to say “Amen” and “I believe” to Jesus hidden in the Blessed Sacrament today, may He also give us the grace to see Him this week in the person who is waiting for our help.

A person whose name we may already be familiar with. A person we may have passed by in silence so many times before. A person who is made in the image and likeness of God.

As St. Vincent de Paul would say, “Go to the poor and you will find God.”