

## **Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time C2025**

You have heard this parable of the rich man and Lazarus many times. I do not want to waste your time by entering into details in explaining it. I rather want to highlight some important points, which can help us in our own preparation for eternal life.

The first thing that comes out of this parable is indifference. The act of indifference constitutes the drama that takes place between the rich man and the poor Lazarus. The parable does not say that the rich man was a bad guy or a mean person who mistreated Lazarus. Neither does it say that he was responsible for the situation of Lazarus.

What it says is only that he never noticed Lazarus. He accepted him as part of his ordinary landscape and thought it was normal that he should lie in pain and hunger while he was living in luxury. In other words, the problem with the rich man was only that he was indifferent toward Lazarus; he literally ignored him while he was lying at his door with hunger and sores. If we have to talk in terms of sins, I can say that his sin is not that he did something wrong, but that he did nothing to help. Maybe it is better to call that a sin of omission.

In truth, indifference makes someone insensitive and deaf to the cry of his fellow human beings. It kills any prospect of solidarity toward the others. It prevents someone from seeing the others in their needs and pain. It keeps him away from them because he does not care, no matter how bad the situation is. At the same time, indifference keeps someone away from God who identifies himself with the suffering and the needy (Mt 25, 31-46). We should never forget that by helping the needy we help God, by rejecting the needy, we reject God.

Indifference opens the gate to the road of hell. Some people say that hell does not exist. According to today's parable hell exists. It is a place of isolation and torment in which people risk finding themselves at the end of their lives. It is a perpetual loss eternal life forever when we do not act according to the law of love of God and of our neighbor. It is a chasm we create for ourselves when we are indifferent to the misery of our fellows.

That is what Abraham tells the rich man. What leads to that place is the way we live here on earth. We have to remember that the way we live on earth determines, to a large extent, our future life. It is not a question of living in fear or feeling guilty, but of taking seriously our commitment as Christians while we are still alive.

Moreover, the distance between Lazarus in heaven and the rich man in the netherworld seems not to be the result of God's judgment, but in reality a ditch that the rich man has dug for himself when he was still alive. The gap he has maintained on earth is maintained in heaven, but in a reversed order. What he has sown on earth, is what he harvests in the other world. It is on earth that the fate of what comes after death takes place.

This parable teaches us also that solidarity, relationships and friendships are decisive criteria for the life after death. In the parable, the rich man lives in loneliness surrounded by his goods, with no involvement with the poor. When someone dies we say that he is survived by his family and relatives. In heaven, what survives us are the relationships we have built with the needy and the poor.

Finally, the parable invites us to the conversion of heart. When we put off for tomorrow what we would do for today, then, we miss the opportunity God gives us to get rid of our sins and receive eternal salvation. The words of Abraham to the rich man are so clear: If your brothers do not listen to Moses and the prophets, even if someone should rise from the dead, they will not listen. Here lies the drama of human stubbornness with regard to the word of God. The misfortune of the rich is due not only to the hardness of his heart, but also of his ears.

When the rich man thinks that when someone from the dead would talk to his brothers, they would change, he is misleading. The foundation of our faith is not in the apparitions, the revelations of angels or visions, but in the word of God. When we fail to listen to the scriptures, we prepare our eternal ruin. There is only one who came from the dead, Jesus Christ. We have to listen to him. Amen.

**Amos 6: 1a, 4-7; 1Timothy 6: 11-16; Luke 16: 19-31**



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