

Read

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 29, 2019



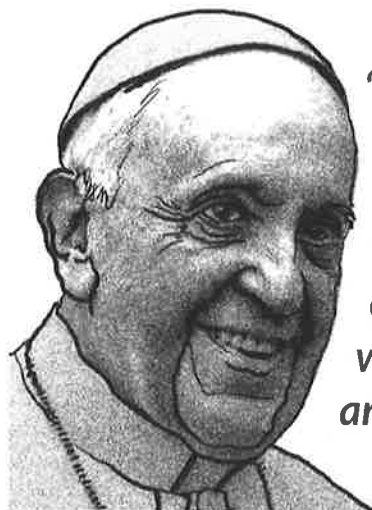
REFLECTION

It is easy to go through life asking ourselves, “What is the *least* I can do and still get by?” If you only try to do the minimum, this Gospel and First Reading should scare you! The minimum will not get you into heaven. Notice that the rich man wasn’t a murderer or cruel. He didn’t slaughter millions like Hitler. He was just lazy. At the end of our lives, God will look at the disposition of our hearts. The Second Reading from Timothy presents a beautiful opposite disposition to laziness. He encourages us to actively pursue and strive for holiness because we are called to much more than laziness. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is often quoted as saying: “The world promises you comfort. But you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness.” This week let us strive to do the maximum for others.



ACTION

The Second Reading from Timothy listed qualities to strive for as Christians. List the following in your journal: righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Picture what “doing the maximum” would be for each quality. Then, ask yourself how you can live out each quality more fully right now. Think about the kind of person you want to become. Will you show greater devotion in your studies by striving to be an excellent student? Or practicing heroic gentleness toward your siblings when they annoy you? Don’t settle for comfort – dream big!



*“Let the Church
always be a place
of mercy and
hope where
everyone is
welcomed, loved,
and forgiven.”*

—Pope Francis

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Where is your heart? Are you striving to do the minimum or the maximum for others?
- ❖ What is a habit you can change this week in your daily habits to go above and beyond?



September 29, 2019

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #138C

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Last week, we focused on how wealth and possessions can become idols, which tear us away from God. Today, this lesson comes to life in a stark way in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Through this story, we see our responsibility to respond to the needs of the poor.

Q FOCUS: *Who is our Lazarus?*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week includes observances of the Memorials of St. Jerome, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, and St. Francis. All of them used their gifts to spread the Gospel and to live for Christ and others. St. Francis' life in particular is a witness to the response to the poor, which we explore this week.

Church Teaching Connection

"God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2443). As Christians, we are called to embrace a preferential option for the poor, focusing our attention, prayer, service, and giving to those most in need, and in doing so, understand that we are serving Christ.

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 16:19-31

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the

tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

At our last session, we talked about the ways in which money and possessions may become idols, tearing us away from God. We also discussed how money and things can be used as tools that are used positively to contribute to the spread of God’s love. Today, we hear a parable that illustrates the extent to which money can become a barrier to God.

► **What are your initial thoughts? What came to mind as you heard the Gospel proclaimed at Mass and again just now?**

As we begin our reflection, remember that Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, who are so convinced of their righteousness, that they not only ignore Jesus but mock him. They observe the letter of the Law,

but often miss the intent or spirit of their religious tradition. It is also important to know that in Jesus’ time, illness, disability, and poverty were believed to be the result of sin. Wealth, health, and a long life were understood to be the reward of righteousness. The same holds true in many ways today. Perhaps not as overtly, but there is still a tendency to look down on those who are poor, and to regard those with wealth as important or special. Those with money have great political and social influence. There are some who subscribe to what is known as a “prosperity gospel,” who believe that wealth is a sign of God’s blessing (and therefore poverty must be due to sin or disbelief). Those who are poor are more likely to bear the burdens of illness and natural disasters, and rely on the advocacy of others to make their condition known.

► **How do you experience the tendency to perceive wealth as a sign of blessing?**

► **Do you recognize within yourself or your family a tendency to look down on those who are poor?**

► **What parallels in your experience do you see in the story of Lazarus and the rich man? Do you see yourself in either?**

Notice that the rich man’s sin is not in being wealthy, but in not using his wealth well. He ignores the needs of the poor, even when the poor sit at his door. We hear in the story that he knew Lazarus’ name, and yet he was blind to Lazarus’ need. Even in death, he only “sees” Lazarus as someone who could serve him, or an errand boy who could go back to warn his brothers.

► **Who are the poor, our “Lazarus” to whom we are blind? Whose needs do we not see?**

In the parable, Abraham speaks for Jesus and the whole of the religious tradition: care for the poor is a sacred responsibility. In other places in the Gospel accounts, Jesus makes it clear that serving the poor is the same as serving him. We are to focus our attention, prayer, service, and giving to those most in need. The Church speaks of this as a preferential option for the poor. Because the poor are often ignored, derided, and invisible to those who are not poor, it is our responsibility as members of Christ’s body, to speak for them and to care for them, with

dignity and respect, just as Abraham showed Lazarus in today's parable.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 38.

In what ways is today's Gospel challenging?

How do you, or do you, serve the poor?

Who is your "Lazarus"?

Act on the Word

Bring the Gospel to Life

For this exercise, have copies of the Gospel printed, or have Bibles for the group members.

Break into small groups of four or five teens. Ask each group to read the Gospel passage aloud. Invite the groups to talk about how such a story happens today. Tell them to imagine themselves as a team of newscasters who are reporting on a situation in your town, or a reporter doing an in-depth story on a homeless person on the streets of your city.

As they talk, challenge them to "see" the poor in your area. What is the experience of those who are poor or vulnerable? What are their greatest needs? What groups or agencies serve the poor? How does your parish reach out with material or emotional support?

Preferential Option

For this exercise, have Bibles for each pair of teens, paper, pens, and note cards. In advance, print out this page from the USCCB website: www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/option-for-the-poor-and-vulnerable.cfm.

Give the teens the printed page from the USCCB website on the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. This includes passages of Scripture related to this topic.

Break into pairs. Give each pair a Bible, paper, pens, and note cards.

Tell the teens to look up the passages noted. Ask them to make notes on each passage and to talk with each other about how the message of the passage can be put into practice in the world today.

Using a separate note card for each passage, note the passage and its specific message. On one side of the card, summarize what the message says about life in your city and the world in general. On the other side, list ways the teens may put into practice the message of the passage.

Once the pairs have finished the discussions and notes, invite them to share with the larger group. Ask one person to read the passage, and then select a few pairs to report their ideas. Invite the other pairs to offer additional thoughts, especially about the ways they may take the passages to heart.

Closing Prayer

Father of mercies,

hear the prayers of your people.

Awaken in us the desire to serve you.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.