



Amos 6:1a, 4-7

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

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31



## Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### September 25, 2022



### REFLECTION

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus draws a very blunt picture of heavenly justice: the poor and humble beggar is carried away by angels; the prosperous but selfish rich man descends into flames; and balance is restored.

However, Jesus has another message to add to the obvious moral of the story. The rich man in his torment begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, but Abraham reminds him about all the prophets that have already been sent to no avail. Why send one more, even one who has been raised from the dead? Here, Christ foreshadows his death and resurrection. But he also challenges us to examine our own excuses. Don't wait for a voice from heaven to prompt you to change your life: Listen to Christ's voice in the Gospels, the sacraments, and Church teaching and begin your transformation today.



### ACTION

You could hardly find a better example of entitlement than the rich man in today's Gospel. Even after his mistreatment of the beggar lands him in hell, the rich man does not think to ask Lazarus for forgiveness. When he sees Lazarus with Abraham in the distance, the rich man tries to send him on errands for him! In his mind, Lazarus is still just an unimportant bit player in the drama of his own life.

This week, as you go about your daily life, pay attention to the people in the background of your own life. The rich man walked past Lazarus every day without ever really seeing him. Take some time this week to get to know the "invisible people" in your school or community.



Check out Aisha Mossberg's TEDx Talk about moving beyond our preconceptions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAFu9MtXaQk>

### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Who are the people you walk past every day without seeing?
- ❖ What excuses do you make for ignoring Christ's teachings?



September 25, 2022

# 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

In today's Gospel Jesus shares the famous story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man had all the material wealth this world could offer. Sitting right outside his gate was a poor man named Lazarus. These two men died but went to significantly different places. Often thought as heaven and hell, the rich man went to a place of torment and suffering while Lazarus when to paradise to sit with Abraham. Somehow, the rich man was able to glimpse this heavenly abode and speak to Abraham. He begged for mercy, but did not receive it. He asked that someone warn his family. That too, was not granted. The reading ends with a foreshadow to Jesus' death and resurrection, coupled with the harsh reality that not everyone would even believe that.

**Q FOCUS:** *God sees and knows those who suffer and invites us to do likewise.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week, the Church remembers St. Vincent de Paul (September 27). His focus on care for the poor, both in their spiritual and physical needs, continues to inspire the Church today. Many charitable organizations bear his name. He helped to form religious societies, including the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity, which continue in his mission to help the poor.

### Church Teaching Connection

"I pray that the Church, and each of you, may be granted the grace to discover the Lord Jesus in our brothers or sisters who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, lacking clothing and dignity, sick and imprisoned, as well as in those who are uncertain, ignorant, persisting in sin, sorrowing, offensive, irascible and annoying. May you find in the glorious wounds of Jesus the vigor of charity, the blessedness of the seed that dies to give life, and the fruitfulness of the rock flowing with water" (Pope Francis, Message on the Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul, September 27, 2017).

## 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:*

► When you hear the word "heaven" what images come to your mind?

► When you hear the word "hell" what images come to your mind?

In our Christian understanding, we can describe heaven as the place or existence in which we are united with God eternally. We can think of hell being the antithesis of heaven, which would mean eternal separation from God.

► What do you notice about heaven and hell from the story of the rich man and Lazarus?

During his life, the rich man seemed to have it all. He dressed in fine clothes and had a comfortable home with plenty of food. One could imagine that he never wanted for anything. In some ways, we might think that this man lived a blessed life. Aren't some of our images of heaven like this? That all our needs are met and we are perfectly happy in every possible way?

Conversely, we see Lazarus, a miserable man. He is hungry, begging for scraps. He has no home so he sits in front of the rich man's gate. Where else could he go? He must have smelled, covered in sores and licked by animals. Poor and alone, some might say that he was living in hell on earth.

These two men, living their lives just a few feet apart, were living radically different lives. When they died they went to drastically different places.

► Does this mean that anyone who has a good life on earth is going to hell? What about anyone who has a challenging life on earth—will they automatically go to heaven?

It is interesting to note that the rich man has no name. He only has his suffering. He has been forgotten by history. On the other hand, the poor man is given a name in this story. This detail helps us to see that God remembers and cares for the poor and broken. As faithful disciples, we are called to do the same, to recognize the humanity in all people.

The rich man did not go to hell because he was rich. He spent eternity separated from God because he chose to ignore the needs of others, not even seeing Lazarus at his door.

It isn't easy to look squarely at injustice and suffering. Often it is easier to try to ignore it and pretend it isn't there. If we forget that our brothers and sisters are suffering, then we are no better than the rich man in this story, seeking only comfort in our lives. This revelation challenges us and can make us feel uncomfortable.

In the face of this discomfort, we should still trust in God and recommit ourselves to a life of faithful discipleship. Our Catholic faith actually calls us to step into the places of discomfort and share the hope of the living God in those spaces. We should move, not

out of fear of eternal punishment, but out of our love for God and desire to image him in our world. God remembers Lazarus. Now we are invited to remember others and share Christ's love with the world.

► How can your faith give you courage to step into places of discomfort so that you can build up the kingdom of God?

## 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 30.

**Our actions in this life have eternal consequences.**

**The Church calls us to see the suffering in this world and not ignore it.**

**Sharing Christ's love with our neighbor might be challenging, but it is at the center of Christian life.**

## Act on the Word

### Do You Love Your Neighbor?

For this activity, you will need chairs set in a circle, enough for each person, minus one.

This is an active game, in which the young people will move around based on responses given to a question. Have the teens sit in the chairs with one person standing in the middle. Using the following directions, play several rounds (one question and subsequent movement equals one round).

- ✱ The game begins with the person in the middle stating their name and one obscure fact about themselves.
- ✱ The person in the middle then approaches someone sitting in the circle. They say the person's name and asks them the question "Do you love your neighbor?" [For example: "Sarah, do you love your neighbor?"]

✱ If the person says "no" the people seated immediately to the right and the left must quickly switch seats, while the person in the middle tries to take one of their seats. Whoever is left without a seat is now in the middle.

✱ If the person says "yes," she continues by saying "especially those who (insert detail about people)." All those people must get up and change seats. [For example, Sarah replies, "Yes, especially those who love to read."] The person in the middle tries to take one of their seats. Whoever is left without a seat is now in the middle.

After the game, spend a few minutes as a large group or in small groups discussing the following questions:

- ✱ In reflecting on the story of Lazarus and our game, who is your neighbor?
- ✱ What uncomfortable spaces do you find yourself in today?
- ✱ What can you do to alleviate the suffering that you encounter around you?
- ✱ Where do you encounter Jesus in the midst of the discomfort and suffering today?

## Closing Prayer

*Good and loving God,  
you hear the cries of those most in need.*

*Help us to be creative  
in meeting the needs of the poor  
so that all may be lifted up  
and have hope for the future.*

*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](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.