



# THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO MAKE YOURS

14 MARCH 2021

## BIBLE READING LUKE 16:19-31

“ 19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. [a] The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. [b] 24 He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ 27 He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ 29 Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30 He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

## INTRODUCTION

Our text today is yet another parable addressed to the Pharisees. Jesus receives sinners because in the Kingdom of God, there is a great reversal.

This reversal often has to do with those who seem to be rich in this life often will be in great want in the life to come. Likewise, those who are poor in this life may, in fact, be those whom God has selected for eternal life.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON TODAY’S SCRIPTURE

This is a parable of startling contrasts, but its central message is simple: be alert to the needs under your nose. It is not concerned with patterns of good living on the part of Lazarus, nor of evil-doing on the part of the rich man. But the latter closed his eyes to the needy at his gate. And without an eye for the needy around us, our life becomes self-centred and callous. Jesus is asking his listeners to open their eyes to what is around them, and to open their ears to the simple commands of the Gospel: love your neighbour.

This is a great story with no ambiguity about it. We have an obligation as followers of Jesus to care. We cannot be indifferent.

While we did not create the problem, we can be part of the solution. Our hearts go out to the millions of old and young in the world just because they are hungry, like Lazarus was at the rich man’s gate.

This story reminds us of the huge inequality of people in Jesus’ time and still today. The parable

invites us to see ourselves as richer in the goods of the world than many millions. Even by having access to this text, you count among the privileged world.

During Lent I try to hear the call to come back home to God. I join the great pilgrimage of people who, through the ages, have been called by Moses and the prophets to listen to the word of the Lord. I asked for a greater sensitivity to those who live with nothing and think of how I might show some compassion to those whose need is greater than mine.

Jesus's message is abundantly clear, *"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?'<sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?'<sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'<sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,<sup>[a]</sup> you did it to me."* (Matthew 25:37-40).

On this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, we are once again reminded that as followers of Jesus, we need to response. As followers of Jesus, we cannot not care. As followers of Jesus, we cannot be indifferent.

## REFLECTION

Comments on the reflection.

- Jesus starts out the story by saying "there was a rich man ..."
- When we hear those words, who or what do we think of? Why?
- Do we ever think of ourselves as included in the category "rich"? Why or why not?
- What about "entitled"? "Privileged"? "Blessed"? Why or why not?
- What responsibilities, if any, go with those categories?

## FURTHER REFLECTION

- When we envision God's justice, what do we envision?
- What would be an example of God's justice, according to that vision?
- Where does our vision of God's justice come from?
- What does that vision of God's justice demand of us in everyday life, do we think? Why?