

# Thursday 2nd of Lent

**Gospel text (Lk 16,19-31): Jesus said to his disciples, «Once there was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and feasted every day. At his gate lay Lazarus, a poor man covered with sores, who longed to eat just the scraps falling from the rich man's table. Even dogs used to come and lick his sores.**

**»It happened that the poor man died and angels carried him to take his place with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. From hell where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham afar off, and with him Lazarus at rest. He called out: 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus with the tip of his finger dipped in water to cool my tongue, for I suffer so much in this fire'. Abraham replied: 'My son, remember that in your lifetime you were well-off while the lot of Lazarus was misfortune. Now he is in comfort and you are in agony. But that is not all. Between your place and ours a great chasm has been fixed, so that no one can cross over from here to you or from your side to us'.**

**»The rich man implored once more: 'Then I beg you, Father Abraham, to send Lazarus to my father's house where my five brothers live. Let him warn them so that they may not end up in this place of torment'. Abraham replied: 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them'. But the rich man said: 'No, Father Abraham. But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent'. Abraham said: 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be con-vinced even if someone rises from the dead'».**

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***«If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the grave»***

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Today, the Gospel is a parable discovering the realities of man in afterlife. Jesus tells us about the divine reward or retribution we shall have depending upon our behavior.

The contrast between the rich and the poor is very strong. The luxury of the rich and his indifference to the plight of poor Lazarus lying at his door, his pathetic situation, even when dogs used to come and lick his sores (cf. Lk 16:19-21). It all has a deep realism introducing us into the scene.

We might ponder, where would I be if I was one of the two main characters of the parable? Our society reminds us, constantly, that we have to live well, in comfort and well-being, enjoying ourselves, worry free... To live for oneself, without minding others, or at the very best, the minimum necessary to keep one's conscience at ease, but certainly not because of a sense of justice, love or solidarity.

Today, we are presented with the need to listen to God in this life, to convert ourselves and take advantage of the time He offers us. God will eventually call us to account. In this life we risk our eternal life.

Jesus is quite explicit about the reality of Hell and He describes some of its characteristics: the sorrow senses suffer —«and send Lazarus with the tip of his finger dipped in water to cool my tongue, for I suffer so much in this fire» (Lk 16:24)— and its eternity —«Between your place and ours a great chasm has been fixed» (Lk 16:26).

Saint Gregory the Great tells us that «all these things are told so that nobody may apologize because of their ignorance». We have got to get rid of the old man and be free to be able to love our fellow man. We have to react to the suffering of the poor, the unwell or the forsaken. It would be good we might frequently remember this parable so that it would made us more responsible of our life. We all will have to face the moment of death. And we should better be always ready because one day we shall be judged.