

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent

Gospel text (Lk 16:19-31): 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.’”

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Fr. Xavier SOBREVÍA i Vidal
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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 this parable? Our society constantly reminds us, that we have to live well, in comfort and well-being, enjoying ourselves, worry free... That we have 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 —“Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.” (Lk 16:24)— and its eternity —“between us and you a great chasm is established” (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 that we might frequently remember this parable so that it would make us more responsible of our own life. We all will have to face the moment of death. And we should better always be ready because one day we shall be judged.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Jesus warned against the danger of earthly possessions. Nevertheless, Jesus did not condemn the possession of earthly goods absolutely. Instead, he was anxious to recall the twofold commandment of love of God and love of neighbor.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“Yet the danger always remains that by a constant refusal to open the doors of their hearts to Christ, the proud, rich and powerful will end up condemning themselves and plunging into the eternal abyss of solitude which is Hell.” (Francis)

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“How can we not recognize Lazarus, the hungry beggar in the parable, in the multitude of human beings without bread, a roof or a place to stay? How can we fail to hear Jesus: ‘As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me’ (Mt 25:45)?.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 2463)