

Homily for Sunday Mass
September 29, 2019
Year C – Luke 16:19-31
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

Our own government estimates some ten percent of the people living in the wealthiest population on the face of the earth fall into a government made category called food insecure; where after the mortgage is paid and basic necessities of existence are paid there is not always enough money for food in general or healthy food that children, that also exist in that population statistic, need to grow and thrive. There are many factors for this problem, some resulting from poor choices by adults but for most it is the simple fact of being part of the working poor in our society. Yes, Jesus did say, "...you will always have the poor with you..." (MK 14:7) but that does not free us to harden our hearts for Jesus continued on in that quote to say, "...and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish..." (MK14:7).

Now, if you are at all like me, we are confronted with the destitute and hungry all the time in a large metropolitan area such as ours. Nearly every busy intersection finds a poor soul holding a pathetic sign asking for food. We also know that these poor souls, still children of God, suffer from an even greater condition that truly nullifies their hunger and calls to pour all their resources into that condition – that of addiction. So, money given will hardly go to resolve any looming hunger crisis but rather perpetuate the greater underlying condition of addiction. The point of this is to call out that hunger is not always an issue we can simply toss spare coins at and wish it away. We are fooling ourselves to think we 'did our part' if we give a dollar or two on even a frequent occasion. These are long term problems that require long term love, care, compassion and determination.

The harsher reality is that most that struggle with food insecurity do so hidden from society. They are not at our gates, such as Lazarus was/is, they are living the best they can in homes and families, just trying to survive the best they can with what life has thrown at them.

And when we pull back from the specific issue of nutrition, we get an even fuller picture of need when we look at secure housing, access to even basic medical care, proper education, and the list goes on. Most of us are blessed, and it is a blessing, with a decent home, health, and healthcare. How about those that suffer, such as Lazarus did, with not a home but a spot on the sidewalk to claim as his and dogs taking the place of medical attendants where they, "...would come and lick his sores..." (LK 16:21).

What to do when there is only ONE of you and so many of the needy? What to do when you fix one problem, but the multi-layers of other problems just negate your efforts and the poor soul goes on in their afflictions? "The sea, O God, so great, my boat so small..." (Winfred Ernest Garrison)!

Retracting further away from the individual, the hungry, the homeless, or the needy we begin to see an even larger global picture of nature and creation. Again, we run into an immense wall of issues around the abuse and neglect of the fruits of the Lord's labors on the dawning day of creation where our Lord God made the heavens and the earth. Our neglect of this divine gift of home, our planet, not only defeats our own well being but that of the fruits of the sixth day, all the creatures God made and placed upon the earth. It all came before us, before humankind, but God did create us as well and gave us dominion over his creation. Dominion to govern and care

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and not to be confused with dominate and abuse – to take advantage of for our own personal gain with no consideration for others let alone future generations.

God warns us of such poor judgement and actions thousands of years earlier when speaking through the Prophet Amos to the then successful and wealthy nation of Israel. “Woe to the complacent in Zion! Lying upon beds of ivory...stretched comfortably...eating [choice meats] ...drinking [in excess, and] ...anointing themselves with the best oils” (Am 6:1,4-6). WOE to us today for our part in the modern version of this old tale of sinfulness!

It is right to look at the Old Testament and the prophets as we are sternly cautioned by St. Luke that God has warned us through them to live correct and any failure on our part to do so will result in the horrific consequences that our rich man experienced in Jesus’ parable.

Now, St. Paul, in his exhortation to Timothy, gives us a guide on how to avoid this terrifying eternal fate and how to live in a world of pollution, greed, sin, hunger, and addiction. He tells us to always, “...pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness... [and to] compete well for the faith” (1Tm 6:11-12). That last part, is faith really a competition? No. That competition is referencing our own internal battles to live our faith against the forces of darkness that will work all manner of trickery to get you to do anything but live the righteous life.

Get your mind right on this my friends, as there is a judgement for us all and living large while not directly hurting others is no defense. Doing good in just token ways is just that, token faith, and Christ said for those that practice a partial, or lukewarm faith, “I will spit you out of my mouth, because you are only warm...” (Rev 3:16) for we must not live a warm faith but a faith hot as fire for Christ in your hearts.

It is easy to fall into the acceptable norms of society but look at where that society is. We do not live in a society of strong believers. We do not live in a society that always values love, faith, and gentleness. As such, going with the flow and following the herd is where the forces of darkness want you to go. Do not do it! Open your minds, and hearts, to the greater world around you. Teach others of the needs and perils that exist and stand your ground against the naysayers. Live the passion each of you have for Jesus Christ, a passion you have shown me time and time again, in all that you do and do not limit it to just certain aspects of your life but spread it liberally over all of your life’s dealings. Remember the words of Mother Theresa when she said if you can’t feed all the hungry, then feed just one. And by our collective willingness to do this we can demonstrate more truly Christian living and compassion where others, God willing, will pick it up and follow as part of a new Godly inspired herd mentality; just think of the world we could have. A world in harmony with each other, a world in harmony with God. And when we so order our lives in this manner, we start to fully live our Gospel values and will most certainly see the glorious resurrection of Jesus and our future salvation.

AMEN