

Homily for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022 Year C

There is a very damning picture painted of the rich in today's readings. They are enjoying lives of luxury, eating and drinking of the best, totally out of touch with real life, whilst people on the fringes of society are rife with poverty. Time runs out for the rich and the roles are reversed, poverty is changed to wealth and riches to misery.

Now Christ told these stories for the most part to listeners who were probably poor and wanted to get a point across to them, so He was not so much castigating the rich but had a lesson that applied to His listeners as well. What was that point? This is a Gospel call to brotherly love aimed at both the rich and poor.

Loving and following Christ means being prepared to share our possessions and time with the marginalised.

There is no evidence there that Dives was cruel towards Lazarus, but he did not take much notice of Lazarus or recognise him as a brother. His sin was that he did nothing.

How often is this our sin as well? We do nothing wrong; we just do nothing.

Dives is cut off from God and tormented in Hades, not for being rich, well fed or beautifully dressed, but because he cut himself off from helping his brother. He ignored the poor man at his gate and closed his heart in the face of the human misery that confronted him daily.

Lazarus provided him with an opportunity to exercise charity, to overcome selfishness and attain eternal salvation. Heaven is prepared for us whilst we are here on earth. We too have the scriptures. Christ reminds us that insofar as you do something for the least of our brethren, then we do it for Him.

Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. These are hard and difficult times, with tougher times ahead, but nobody is exempt from responsibility for the less fortunate members of society. We have obligations to the poor at home and in the Third World. The radical observation of the Gospel is that, within prudence and reason, the little we have we must share.

If we close our minds and hearts to the pleas of the orphans and widows or the sick and the lonely, then we will pay the price.

So, we should ask ourselves the question 'What am I doing personally for the poor'? Am I generous to the point of hurting myself? Do I take notice of the poor and oppressed in my neighbourhood?

Our world is awash with suffering. Wherever we look there is sorrow to be comforted, need to be supplied, and pain to be relieved.

We cannot say that we do not know. Do we realise that to even have a job in the present economic climate is to be privileged and that the unemployed are the new oppressed in our society.

As Christ said, 'the poor you always have with you', and that poverty can take many diverse forms. The sheer size of universal need can be overwhelming. We cannot solve it all, but with prudence and generosity we should go so far as to meet that challenge upon our time and money. To close our eyes and hearts to the challenge of the poor is to close our eyes to the presence of Christ in the plight of the needy.