

## Reflection for the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

Today, in our Gospel Reading taken from Luke 16:19-31, we hear of the rich man and Lazarus. It is Lazarus who is at the door or gate of the house of the rich man. In the *New American* translation of our Gospel reading this Sunday Lazarus is at the door of the rich man's house. But in the *Revised Standard* translation of our Gospel reading, Lazarus is at the gate of the rich man's house. It is the *New American* translation of the Bible that was used to create the Lectionary that is used for all the readings that we have at Mass, in English in the United States of America. Lazarus in his lifetime receives no help, not even from the rich man, whose house he stayed in front of. The rich man was so focused on his life that he made no effort to reach out to Lazarus. He was focused on himself and did not appear able to see beyond his needs even when he was in the netherworld in torment. It was in the netherworld that it appears that the rich man first noticed Lazarus and his first reaction was not joy for Lazarus, but rather the rich man wanted to find a way to use him.

Clearly the rich man in our Gospel Reading appears to be very focused on his needs and the needs of his family. At first glance we might see this focus as a good thing, do we not want fathers and husbands being focused on the needs of their wives and children. Last Sunday when I was in Padua, I saw not one but two fathers being very attentive to their children and their wives. I thought it was wonderful to see young men embracing their role as husband and father. We can see that on a regular basis in our Parish, husbands and fathers being attentive to their wives and children. Of course, I would think that the women of our Parish with all that they do for their families might think, hey, are we invisible do you not see us? This might not be the response of the women in our Parish to what I have written, but it would be understandable if that was the response of some of the women that read this reflection. It would also be understandable for Lazarus to respond in this manner.

I would say that there is something missing in the rich man's response to Lazarus getting his eternal reward. We might be able to turn to the Gospel reading that we had on Saturday of the 25<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time. I celebrated this Saturday Mass in Florence with our Pilgrims in the dining room of the Hotel we were staying in. In the Gospel Reading taken from the Gospel of Luke 8:4-15, we hear of Jesus sharing with a large crowd the parable of the Sower and the seed. It was only when the seed landed on rich soil that the seed produced a rich harvest of a hundredfold. My homily at the Mass on last Saturday started with a question, what type of soil do you have in your heart? That is a good question for each of us to ponder and to answer, but before we do, we might want to ask the rich man what type of soil he has in his heart. Clearly the soil that the rich man has in his heart is not the type that is able to see Lazarus as anything more than a tool for him to use. May you and I learn from the rich man and have soil in our hearts that enables us to see everyone as a child of God and worthy of love and compassion

In light of our Gospel Reading today we might want to ask ourselves a few questions. Who is waiting at the door of your heart today? Is it a friend? Maybe it is a complete stranger? The person might be a member of your family? Or could it be Jesus Christ waiting for you to open the door? What is for certain is that the only way you will know who is at the door to your heart is to call out from the depths of your being, and ask "*who is it?*" This simple question, and the answer to this question can have a deep and lasting impact on you and your faith journey. This simple question, that needs an open heart to be asked, provides a moment and an opportunity to engage with others and for everyone from that encounter with the grace of God, to be forever changed.