

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year C

*You must aim to be saintly and religious, filled with faith and love, patient and gentle. Fight the good fight of the faith and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were called. (1 Tm 6:11-12)*



### First Reading

*Amos 6:1.4-7*

The almighty Lord says this: Woe to those ensconced so snugly in Zion and to those who feel so safe on the mountain of Samaria. Lying on ivory beds and sprawling on their divans, they dine on lambs from the flock, and stall-fattened veal; they bawl to the sound of the harp, they invent new instruments of music like David, they drink wine by the bowlful, and use the finest oil for anointing themselves, but about the ruin of Joseph they do not care at all. That is why they will be the first to be exiled; the sprawlers' revelry is over.

### Second Reading

*1 Timothy 6:11-16*

As a man dedicated to God, you must aim to be saintly and religious, filled with faith and love, patient and gentle. Fight the good fight of the faith and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were called when you made your profession and spoke up for the truth in front of many witnesses. Now, before God the source of all life and before Jesus Christ, who spoke up as a witness for the truth in front of Pontius Pilate, I put to you the duty of doing all that you have been told, with no faults or failures, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who at the due time will be revealed by God, the blessed and only Ruler of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone is immortal, whose home is in inaccessible light, whom no man has seen and no man is able to see: to him be honour and everlasting power. Amen.

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So he cried out, 'Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.' 'My son,' Abraham replied 'remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours.'

The rich man replied, 'Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too.' 'They have Moses and the prophets,' said Abraham, 'let them listen to them.' 'Ah no, father Abraham,' said the rich man, 'but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent.' Then Abraham said to him, 'If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.'"

## Meditation

*Parables demand careful reading. There is little detailed description about the characters in today's gospel. It is never said that the rich man is wicked. We are never told that Lazarus badgers him for help which he actively refuses. Between them, however, lies an abyss that cannot be bridged. It is the abyss of unawareness and self-sufficiency. The anaesthetized conscience of the rich man is no longer touched by the reproach of poverty.*

*Thus we can understand Jesus' warnings: "How hard it will be for the rich to go into the kingdom of God. Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Lk 18:25). Sometimes we read on the door of elegant buildings: "No soliciting". What if that prohibition were to be found reversed at the threshold of the kingdom, "The rich need not apply." That is the picture Luke seems to paint.*

*Is there no redemption then for the rich? At the door of the kingdom there are no rich and poor. Both are saved by the word of God. That word reveals to men and women their radical interdependence. The self-sufficiency of the rich can blind them to the Lazarus at their gates. The affluence of our society can close our ears to the cries of the third world. In neglecting their needs, we exclude ourselves from the table of the kingdom.*