

The Twenty Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Cycle C 2022

In the first reading from the Book of Amos, he told the rich in the Southern Kingdom of Judah in Zion, who were living a life of luxury, that their grand parties would soon come to an end and they too would be the first to be sent into exile. They had not been bothered by the collapse of Joseph, a reference to the destruction of the Northern Kingdom due to a lack of justice and the ill treatment of the poor there. Except for being very rich and having a wonderful time enjoying their great prosperity, they did not seem to be unjust like those who had lived in the Northern Kingdom. Why then would they be punished?

They failed to recognize that the things they enjoyed, were gifts from God, which should have made them grateful to God and generous to others. We enjoy great prosperity compared to the rest of the world. We have comfortable homes, clean running water, electricity, air-conditioning, cars, and lots of food. Some of us even have pools; can afford vacation trips, fancy restaurants, and designer clothes. Is it **our** wealth or God's gifts? How do we give thanks to God? What percentage of our income do we give to the Church and to the poor? Protestants and a few of our parishioners do tithe and give ten percent of their gross income. I would be happy if most Catholics could give three percent to the Church and another three percent to the poor.

How much would you pay a week for a nice small cottage in heaven where you can live in peace and tranquility for the rest of your life . . .for all eternity?

Earthly comforts are no longer regarded as gifts from a gracious God. Instead they have become an end in themselves with no regard for the one who gave them. The arrogant will say: I myself earned everything, I owe God nothing. Think of

this, a rickshaw (hand drawn cart) driver once asked a wealthy doctor whom he was carrying, why did God allow you to be born in America and me to be born in the slums of India?

In the parable that Jesus told us today, the rich man in the words of Joel Osteen, the evangelist on television, “lived life to the fullest” as he enjoyed every good thing. There is no mention of rich man being unjust or immoral. He never ill-treated or insulted Lazarus. However, his preoccupation with the pleasures of life resulted in his failure to recognize the suffering around him. He only recognized his shortcomings when it was too late: when he died and was condemned to live apart from God and Abraham.

Are we so busy pursuing the pleasures and the status symbols of this culture that we have no time to recognize the suffering and the injustices around us and in the world? We who have been blessed and enjoy a comfortable life have the responsibility to help others in need. Jesus is the one who came back from the dead. And still we do not listen to him.

We are allowed to enjoy our blessings and good fortune but we must also hold fast to the truths and principles of our faith, which include gratitude and generosity. Brothers and sisters, we cannot claim ignorance. We have the Church and the Gospel that make it very clear that we must thank God for the resources we have, and be willing to share our good fortune with the poor and needy. Do you know many children on the planet Earth, under 5 years old die of malnutrition According to World Health Organization (WHO) affiliated with the United Nations, in 2016, 15,000 children form malnutrition a day, 5.48M a year.

According to today's scriptures, those who refuse to share, will eventually loose all their material wealth as well as eternal life.