

Wellspring

Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

www.wellspringcommunity.net

frgus@suddenlink.net

September 25, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the Twenty sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. We continue to journey with Jesus and his disciples through the Gospel of Luke. Last week, we reflected on cultivating a healthy and wholesome attitude toward all our possessions. Our Scripture readings of this Sunday call us to be grateful for all our possessions which are God's gracious gifts to us and let our gratitude make us mindful of those who are less privileged, the poor, the orphans, the suffering, the neglected and the marginalized in our world.

Last week, we heard Amos the prophet (780 B.C.E.) bluntly and forcefully condemning the behavior of the rich of his day as not befitting the justice and mercy of God, championing the cause of the poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalized. In the days of Amos, Israel had become rich and affluent and began to take the Lord for granted and become unmindful of the less privileged, the poor and the marginalized in their world. The first verse of today's first reading (Amos 6:1) is a warning to the rich who lived in luxury that they would be the first to go into exile if they didn't change their ways and, indeed, this warning was realized in 722 B.C.E. when Assyria swept out of the north, captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and took the ten tribes into captivity.

Our second reading today is from Chapter 6 of Paul's letter to Timothy. In the beginning of this chapter, Timothy was advised to be cautious of the desire for wealth, love of money, etc. because some men, in their passion for it have strayed from their faith. Today's excerpt begins with a challenge, "Man of God that you are, flee from all this (love of money, etc.). Instead, "seek after integrity, piety, faith, steadfastness and a gentle spirit. Fight the good fight of faith."

Timothy is being reminded that the faith he nobly professed at his baptism is the same faith that prompted him to bear witness to Jesus Christ and be a loyal and steadfast teacher and caretaker of that faith for the community. He is now being instructed to treasure and to teach sound doctrine, to seek virtue, avoid evil and persevere in following the way of Jesus, to bear witness to Christ and to give honor and glory to God just as Christ gave honor and glory to God.

I encourage you to read the rest of chapter 6 when you have time – all about avoiding and being cautious of evil tendencies and living virtuous lives. One of the evil tendencies that Timothy is being cautioned is the desire for riches and material possessions. All possessions are

God's gifts to us for our own use and for the good of the community. But the desire for wealth and the tendency to hang on to them make us unfree. Our possessions begin to possess us, and we become unfree. Paul advised Timothy to be cautious of this tendency and live a virtuous life.

Our Gospel reading today gives us the story of the rich man and Lazarus. This is an amazing story of a "reversal" of fortunes – the rich man who was thought to be "blessed" became punished and separated from all his luxuries and Lazarus, the poor man, became "blessed" and honored. The culture of the day saw wealth as God's blessings and poverty as God's curse and punishment...the rich man was blessed, and Lazarus was punished.

Lazarus, the beggar was welcomed, the rich man found himself in torment, excluded from all that gave him joy. The rich man was unmindful of Lazarus. He did not abuse the poor beggar neither did he throw him out or insult him. He just didn't even acknowledge the presence of Lazarus. Lazarus was passed over, not included but ignored. The dishonored and the unclean and the poor and the sinner became included among the saved and blessed.

It is important to note that Jesus was not condemning wealth or wealthy people and he was not presenting poverty as the ideal. Nor was Jesus teaching that God hates the rich or the powerful. He was consciously upsetting the perceived "map" of society that indicated who enjoyed God's favor and who was in the inner circle of God's elect. The rich man, in today's parable, followed a "map" that did not include Lazarus and therefore allowed him to step over and pass by the poor man at his gate. The disciples of Jesus are to follow a more inclusive map that reflects the all-embracing love of God for all people.

This story calls forth a change of our attitude toward wealth and all other possessions and a conversion of mind and heart toward the poor and the less privileged in our community. It calls us to be grateful for what we have and be open to sharing them with the less privileged around us. It calls us to be mindful of the "Lazarus" at our gate, on our street corners, in our cities and in our neighborhoods and be attentive to their needs. It calls us to do justice to the poor and the oppressed, to include all people into our circles and be very mindful of those who are less privileged...reorder our life according to the principles of compassion, mercy, loving kindness, steadfast love...God's all-embracing, unfailing love.

Today, we live in a nation that is one of the most privileged in our world. Let us be grateful and let our gratitude make us mindful of those who are less privileged, the poor, the orphans, the suffering, the neglected and the marginalized in our world.

I want to encourage you to be still for a few moments each day of this week, reflect on how your day has been, how grateful you have been for your possessions and how you have used them for your own good and the good of others.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Twenty sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 25, 2022

O Lord, do not let us turn into “broken cisterns” that can hold no water, do not let us be so blinded by the enjoyment of the good things of earth that our hearts become insensible to the cry of the poor, of the sick, of orphaned children and of those innumerable brothers and sisters of ours who lack the necessary minimum to eat, to clothe their nakedness, and to gather their family together in one roof.
(Pope John XXIII)

Collect

O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

Amos 6:1, 4-7

The first verse of this excerpt cites the complacency of those who lived in luxury and reminds them of what would happen to them if they don't change their ways. In the days of Amos, the Prophet, Israel had become rich and affluent and began to take the Lord for granted and become unmindful of the poor and the marginalized in their world. Amos gives us a graphic description of the way the rich lived and enjoyed themselves, eating and drinking and anointing themselves with rich oils while the poor struggled for survival. Amos reminded the rich that their lifestyle was an affront to the justice of God.

Today, we live in a nation that is one of the most privileged in our world. Let us be grateful and let our gratitude make us mindful of those who are less privileged, the poor, the orphans, the suffering, the neglected and the marginalized in our world.

Psalm 146

The Psalmist calls us to praise God, not just for an hour in song.....but with the whole of our being at all times and in all places. Because as the last verse says. “the Lord reigns forever” and His reign can be trusted. To reign is govern and to govern is to care - verses 8-9 proclaims this confidence. **God is a God who keeps “faith” forever - He is the living God.** Therefore, God is worthy of our trust. He calls all people to do what God does and that is the way we are to praise God. We are to learn to be like Him and do what He does. Amen.

**Blessed is he who keeps faith forever,
Secures justice for the oppressed,
Gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the captives free.**

I Timothy 6:11-16

Paul instructed Timothy to treasure and to teach sound doctrine, seek virtue, avoid evil and persevere in following the way of Jesus..... “Man of God that you are.....seek after integrity, piety, faith, steadfastness and a gentle spirit. Fight the good fight of faith.” Paul instructed Timothy to be faithful, to bear witness to Christ and to give honor and glory to God just as Christ gave honor and glory to God.

Cultivate virtues: integrity, fidelity, steadfastness, gentleness, mindfulness.....

Luke 16:19-31

The story of Lazarus and the rich man announced a “reversal” of fortunes – those who were seemingly “unblessed” became blessed and those who seemed “blessed” became “unblessed”. The system, nice and neat and comfortable and predictable, became upsetting and unsettling to those who were perceived as enjoying God’s favor and those who were in the inner circle of God’s chosen ones. The dishonored and the unclean and the poor and sinner became included among the saved and blessed.

Lazarus, the beggar was welcomed, the rich man found himself in torment, excluded from all that gave him joy. The rich man was unmindful of Lazarus. He did not abuse the poor beggar neither did he throw him out or insult him. He just didn’t even acknowledge the presence of Lazarus. Lazarus was passed over, not included but ignored.

This story calls forth a reordering of social systems, to do justice to the poor and the oppressed, to include all people into our circles and be very mindful of those who are less privileged...reorder life according to the principles of compassion, mercy, loving kindness, steadfast love...God’s all-embracing, unending love.

Saint of the day, September 25 - St. Louis Martin and Azélie Guérin and 29 other saints are remembered this day

Louis Joseph Aloys Stanislaus Martin was born on August 22, 1823 in Bordeaux, Gironde, France. Although Louis intended to become a monk, wishing to enter the Augustinian Great St. Bernard Monastery, he was rejected because he did not succeed at learning Latin. Later he decided to become a watchmaker and studied his craft in Rennes and in Strasbourg.

Azélie-Marie Guérin was born in Gandelain, Orne, France on December 23, 1831. She wanted to become a nun, but was turned away by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul due to respiratory difficulties and recurrent headaches. She later decided to become a lacemaker, manufacturing Alençon lace.

Louis and Azélie met, fell in love and got married in 1858. Azélie's business became so successful that, in 1870, Louis sold his watchmaking business to go into partnership with her. They were blessed with nine children, though two sons and two daughters died in infancy.

Azélie died from breast cancer in 1877 and Louis then moved the family to Lisieux to be near his brother and sister-in-law, who helped with the education of his five surviving girls. His health began to fail after his 15-year-old daughter entered the Monastery of Mount Carmel at Lisieux in 1888. Louis died in 1894, a few months after being committed to a sanitarium.

The home that Louis and Azélie created nurtured the sanctity of all their children, but especially their youngest, who is known to us as Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Louis and Azélie were canonized by Pope Francis on October 18, 2015.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Compassion is not a doctrine.

It is the deepest and most meaningful expression of our love for God and neighbor.