

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (September 29): **Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom**

Gospel Reading: *Luke 16:19-31*

19 "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' 27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

Meditation: What most absorbs your time, your attention, and your heart? In the parable of the rich man who refused to help the beggar named Lazarus Jesus paints a dramatic scene of contrasts - riches and poverty, heaven and hell, compassion and indifference, inclusion and exclusion. We also see an abrupt and dramatic reversal of fortune. Lazarus was not only poor and a beggar, he was also sick and unable to fend for himself. He was "laid" at the gates of the rich man's house. The dogs which licked his sores probably also stole the little bread he got for himself. Dogs in the ancient world symbolized contempt. Enduring the torment of these savage dogs only added to the poor man's miseries and sufferings.

The rich man treated the beggar with contempt and indifference, until he found his fortunes reversed at the end of his life! In God's economy, those who hold on possessively to what they have, lose it all in the end, while those who share generously receive back many times more than they gave away.

Hope in God and his merciful help

The name *Lazarus* means *God is my help*. Despite a life of misfortune and suffering, Lazarus did not lose hope in God. His eyes were set on a treasure stored up for him in heaven. The rich man, however, could not see beyond his material wealth and possessions. He not only had every thing he needed, he selfishly spent all he had on himself. He was too absorbed in what he possessed to notice the needs of those around him. He lost sight of God and the treasure of heaven because he was preoccupied with seeking happiness in material things. He served wealth rather than God. In the end the rich man became a beggar!

Do you know the joy and freedom of possessing God as your true and lasting treasure? Those who put their hope and security in the kingdom of heaven will not be disappointed (see Hebrews 6:19).

Psalm 146:1,6b-10

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul!

6b LORD who keeps faith for ever;

7 who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free;

8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

9 The LORD watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

10 The LORD will reign for ever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

A Daily Quote for the early church fathers: *Creator of both rich and poor*, by Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

"God made both the rich and the poor. So the rich and the poor are born alike. You meet one another as you walk on the way together. Do not oppress or defraud anyone. One may be needy and another may have plenty. But the Lord is the maker of them both. Through the person who has, He helps the one who needs - and through the person who does not have, He tests the one who has." (excerpt from *Sermon 35, 7*)

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, you are my joy and my treasure. Make me rich in the things of your heavenly kingdom and give me a generous heart that I may freely share with others the spiritual and material treasures you have given to me." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World Peace, .

Lord God, We remember Christ your Son who is peace itself and who has washed away our hatred with His blood.

Because you love all men and women, look with mercy on all who are engaged in battle. banish the violence and evil within all combatants so that one day, we may all deserve to be called your sons and your daughters.

Grant this in your wisdom Lord. **Amen.**