**26th Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle. C. 2025.**

**Not to care is a crime**: The key to true obligation towards our neighbor lies in the depth and sincerity of our sense of reality. If he is real to us, if his freedom, his hopes, his nature, his problems, his existence are really felt and accepted by us as being real and as important as our own, and to that degree we feel obligation towards him in the way we use our freedom.

**What was the crime of the rich man in today’s para**ble? What he did do to suffer torment in Hades? **The parable nowhere blames the rich man for having acquired his wealth unjustly or having committed any other crime.** He did not kick Lazarus out, shout at him or try to remove him from near his gate. **His only crime was that he never care**d for Lazarus. The sin of the rich man was **not a sin of commi**ssion that is, doing something he should not have done. On the contrary, **it was a sin of omission** that is, not doing something he should have done.

While enjoying his wealth, he did not bother to lift a finger to help Lazarus in his dire need. The frightening thing about Christs’ parable is: **the rich man was obviously a belie**ver. It is quite possible that he took care to read the scriptures and perform his religious duties. **But his belief had not changed his attitude towards others. His heart remained like a st**one. He did not feel anything at all when he saw Lazarus suffer or did he even notice poor Lazarus?

The reversal of fortunes is certainly a central theme of the parable. In the other world, the roles of the rich man and Lazarus are reversed. **Now it is the rich man who tries to get the attention of Abraham and the pity of the Lazaru**s. But it is too late; an abyss separates them and it is an abyss created by the callousness of the rich man. His request for Lazarus to serve him even in torment reveals a hardened heart- illustrating how earthly attitudes shape our spiritual destiny.The parable shows precisely what happens when **we close our eyes to anyone in need or when we enjoy our wealth selfishly, showing no concern for the poor.**

Today’s Gospel confronts every one of us believers with the question: Towards the goods I possess, whatever be its quality and quantity, do I have a truly Christian attitude of evangelical poverty or do I allow the comforts they offer to lead me into abuses and scandals? Do my resources lead me to live a thoughtless and selfish life, without feeling the pain and the dire necessities of the poor, without a heart for them? Is my life **an insult to the life of the less fortunate who make up the majorit**y? Our wealth is for sharing. But the wealthier we are, the harder it is to share. Our wealth makes us insensitive, it numbs our feelings and we just do not have the slightest inkling of the plight of the poor. This is unfortunately the greatest tragedy of the rich.

**Prophet Amos’ blunt critique of the affluent in Zion echoes today’s invitation** to examine how comfort might blind us to the suffering around **us**. Living in an isolated, insulated land of luxury, the **rich man in todays’ Gospel is a typical example**. **His sin is criminal unconcern.**

**Happy are the rich who do not let their wealth harden their hearts. A terrible malady it** is. Happy are the poor who do not let their poverty dishearten them. A real possibility it is. The parable of the **rich man and the Lazarus** is not just an afterlife allegory- it is a sharp call to transform our hearts now, to heed the scriptures, and to act with integrity and mercy.

***In what ways might I be “lying on ivory couches”, comfortable yet blind to injustice?***

***How do I respond to Gods’ call to pursue righteousness, faith, love, patience and gentleness in my daily life?***

 ***What changes would I need to make to better live out Christs’ solidarity with the poor?***

 ***Do my actions reflect the transformative power of scripture that Abraham affirms- are my daily choices shaped by its guidance?***