



**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

***The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity / Creationtide***

**Gospel Reading**

**Luke 16:19-end**

**The Rich Man and Lazarus**

<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on 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.” <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” <sup>27</sup> He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” <sup>29</sup> Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” <sup>30</sup> He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” <sup>31</sup> He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

**Other Readings: Amos 6:1a,4-7**

**Psalm 146**

**1 Timothy 6:6-19**

**Homily**

If you could switch your life with one other person alive in the world today, who would that be?

This may seem like an attractive idea, perhaps choosing the life of a celebrity, royalty or the superrich. Of course, the very thought may be of little interest to you. However, if such a swap *was* possible, and done at random, it is most likely that you would end up walking in the shoes of someone who is less privileged and financially poorer than you are. The impact of wealth inequality is increasingly felt by our global neighbours with a significant rise in poverty impacting vulnerable populations. Global warming is worsening these existing inequalities and is a reminder that the more privileged of us should act, and act quickly as we seek to care for God’s creation.

Considering our gospel reading, we should sit up and pay attention to this increasing divide between those who are rich, and those who are poor. We must begin by asking ourselves how important this is to us, today. Is it of no importance, moderately important or of critical importance? How we react will directly impact our desire and

ability to respond to the need of our global neighbours and to seek God's heart for the poor and disadvantaged, in our time.

In Luke 16, it is the rich man who "feasted sumptuously every day" whilst the poor man, Lazarus, suffered in poverty. Beyond their earthly life, the rich man found himself in Hades where he was tormented, whilst Lazarus enjoyed comfort alongside Abraham - how the tables had turned! The chasm between them was too wide for even a momentary release from agony for the rich man and could not be closed. The question for us is whether the chasm of injustice that exists between rich and poor can be closed in our time as we seek to care for God's creation. After all, we believe in the *Imago Dei*, that each person is created in the image of God and therefore has inherent dignity and value, regardless of where they are born. And yet, the reality suggests quite the opposite.

Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, states: "the opposite of poverty is justice." Yes, justice, not wealth or riches. Our global neighbours, made in the image of God, increasingly suffer in this life because we do not put our belief into practice. The rich man thought he could warn his five brothers of their impending torment, but Abraham points out that the words of Moses and the prophets had not worked, so nor would the sending of Lazarus, bringing a further warning. In short, through the Law of Moses, God spoke about loving God and neighbour and being a people of justice. Through the prophets, God spoke again because he could see the chasm growing between rich and poor. Amos is just one example of a prophet who spoke to warn God's people: "woe to you who are complacent" suggests that failing to act on behalf of the poor and marginalised is a sin against God and neighbour (Amos 6:1). Still, those who had the power to act failed in their social responsibility having neglected the needs of the poor. In the afterlife, their accrued wealth was worthless. The Apostle Paul warns "the rich" in 1 Timothy 6 to not put their hope in wealth, but to do good. Good includes seeking justice for the poor.

God really does care for the wellbeing of all his people, regardless of where they are born. For those of us with plenty, or who enjoy justice, we must "do good" and act to renew our commitment to loving God and neighbour in very tangible ways. Beyond wealth inequality, we must not be complacent to the impact of global warming, which disproportionately impacts the world's poorest populations, pushing millions into poverty and increasing inequality. Whilst erratic weather conditions may cause us inconvenience or a little discomfort to us, entire communities across the globe suffer with lack of clean water, food shortages and health crises. This is an injustice.

Whilst this may feel like an overwhelming task, we're reminded of the words of the Psalmist: "Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob" (Psalm 146). We alone may not be able to fix the big issues of poverty, but with God's help, we can make a difference. But first we must resist complacency. As we love God's creation and each person, lovely made in His image, we must make this of critical importance in our lives, so that the chasm between us can be closed, not waiting for the world to come, but today, in our time.

## Conversation Questions

1. How important is the reality of global injustice to you? How will your rating affect your ability to bring about change?
2. What can you practically do, in your power, to change the impact of global warming on your global neighbours?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

## Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

## Collect of the day

*God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit  
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:  
grant that your people may be fervent  
in the fellowship of the gospel  
that, always abiding in you,  
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*(or)*

*Lord God,  
defend your Church from all false teaching  
and give to your people knowledge of your truth,  
that we may enjoy eternal life  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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