

Homily. 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. C. 24/25 September 2022.

The poor man has a name. He is known to us as Lazarus. This means he has an identity, a substance and reality, a past and a future destiny.

Being named, we can imagine him and his plight today. He is the poor and needy person sitting in front of our door and before our eyes, if we would only look at him. He is one person, and he is all of those people who call on our generosity, compassion and care, if only we will notice them.

The rich man has no name. He is real but he has no personal identity. At heart he isn't a person at all since he lacks all of the the basics of humanity. He can be anyone of us, too, but still he's a no-one despite spending his life trying to be someone special and important. By his choice not to look at the person in front of him, omitting to even notice the sick and desperate Lazarus at his door, he seals his own fate. His destiny is to become a no-one forever in a self made torment of isolation, cut off from even the scraps of help by a huge fixed gulf that no one can cross.

We see this when he starts realising his fate. Appealing to Abraham, the first amongst us who looked, listened and walked every day in faith with God, he still wants to give orders. Father Abraham, send Lazarus to do this and that for me, he said. The outrage and the hide of him! But, now he has no power, no position, no innate worth or value. Abraham, with ever decreasing patience, must reject each appeal. No quenching water on Lazarus finger tip; No messages from the dead Lazarus warning his brothers.

As Abraham put it, Lazarus, the man he ignored, is having his comfort and consolation now. What arrogance and entitlement it was for the once a upon a time rich man to imagine that Lazarus, or indeed anyone, would serve him now, he who served no one in life but himself. What's more, he and his brothers, never listened to the voice of God's Prophetic words. If this was too much trouble, too much of a distraction from getting wealthy and living hedonistically, then not even the dead rising will change anything. He's made his bed and now he has to lie on it, even as it burns.

Jesus said all of this to the Pharisees who prided themselves on being righteousness while looking down upon and judging the faults and inadequacies of others. It was a timely warning, a wake up call to them. It ought be just as timely and awakening for us today who in all this world are counted among the most blessed and gifted.

Best then that we look and notice and do something helpful today in the same way that Jesus looks at and does his all for us, lest we end up nameless no-bodies cut off from all help stewing and boiling in our own juices. For as Jesus also said; the amount we measure out is the amount we will be given back.