



Luke 16:19-31

19 Jesus said: 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. **20** And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, **21** who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. **22** Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. **24** So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity 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." **25** "My son," Abraham replied, "remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. **26** But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours."

27 'The rich man replied, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, **28** since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too." **29** "They have Moses and the prophets," said Abraham, "let them listen to them." **30** "Ah no, father Abraham," said the rich man, "but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." **31** Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Other readings: Amos 6:1,4-7 Psalm 145 (146) 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Once again we hear a parable which is only recorded by the evangelist Luke. It is a high point of the social teaching of Jesus. He points to the desperate injustice of one man's treatment of another, a theme which is as relevant today as it was then.

The profound disregard which the rich man shows to the poor man at his very gate should give us all a jolt. Is it possible we too perpetrate such injustice? The parable makes very clear that the time for action is now. The day will come when the 'great gulf' will be fixed and we will no longer be able to assist our fellow human beings in their need.

The rich man from Hades continues to look on Lazarus as his inferior. He asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers to repent. But the warning is already to be found in the words of the Scriptures, in the Law and in prophets such as Amos.

Does the parable have anything to say to me here and now?

Am I sufficiently committed to working for a better world?

Let us pray for the eyes to see the needs of others and the heart to respond.

Let us pray for justice and solidarity in human affairs.

