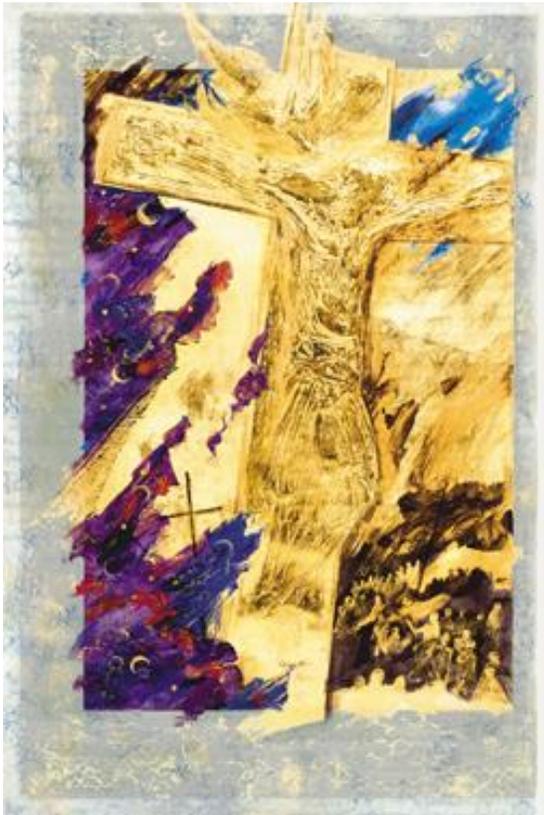


Lenten Reflections

March 21, 2019



If you had to choose, what would you prefer? To be rich and dine sumptuously every day, having everything you could ever want in this world? Or be a poor beggar, covered with sores, living in a doorway, feeling the pains of hunger? It's an easy answer on the surface. The rich and comfortable life is more attractive at first thought. But the question should not be considered only on the surface, we must look deeper and consider the full contrast of these two people and the effects that their inner lives have on their eternal souls.

The rich man is nameless. He could be anyone. But the poor man in this story is called Lazarus. Jesus takes the time to give him a name. He sees Lazarus as a person, an individual with Value.

As for whether you are rich or poor in this life, it really shouldn't matter. Though that's a hard conviction to arrive at, interiorly, it must be our goal. Heaven and the riches that await must be our focus. And we prepare for Heaven by hearing the Word of God and responding with the utmost generosity.

The rich man could have responded in this life by seeing the dignity and value of the poor man lying in his doorway and reaching out in love and mercy. But he didn't. He was focused on himself.

Reflect, today, upon the stark contrast between these two men, and especially the eternity that awaited each of them. If you see any of the sinful tendencies of this rich man in your life, then repent of these sins and do it today. See the dignity and value in each person you encounter. And if you seem to be more focused upon your own self, consumed with selfish pleasures and excess, seek to embrace true poverty of spirit, striving to be attached only to God and the abundant blessings that come with a full embrace of all that He has revealed to us.

Lord, please free me from my own selfishness. Help me, to remain focused upon the dignity of all people, and to pour myself out in their service. May I discover in the poor, the broken and the humble, an image of You. As I discover Your presence in their lives, may I love You in them, seeking to be an instrument of Your mercy.

Sr. Annelle Velivis, Director Blessed Mary Angela Institute

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent

Lectionary: 233

Reading 1 [Jer 17:5-10](#)

Thus says the LORD:

Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings,
who seeks his strength in flesh,
whose heart turns away from the LORD.

He is like a barren bush in the desert
that enjoys no change of season,
But stands in a lava waste,
a salt and empty earth.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose hope is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted beside the waters
that stretches out its roots to the stream:

It fears not the heat when it comes,
its leaves stay green;

In the year of drought it shows no distress,
but still bears fruit.

More tortuous than all else is the human heart,
beyond remedy; who can understand it?

I, the LORD, alone probe the mind
and test the heart,

To reward everyone according to his ways,
according to the merit of his deeds.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6](#)

R. (40:5a) **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**

Blessed the man who follows not
the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the LORD
and meditates on his law day and night.

R. **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**

He is like a tree
planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,

and whose leaves never fade.

Whatever he does, prospers.

R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Not so, the wicked, not so;

they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

For the LORD watches over the way of the just,

but the way of the wicked vanishes.

R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Verse Before the Gospel [See Lk 8:15](#)

Blessed are they who have kept the word with a generous heart
and yield a harvest through perseverance.

Gospel [Lk 16:19-31](#)

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen
and dined sumptuously each day.

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,
who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps
that fell from the rich man's table.

Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died,

he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried,
and from the netherworld, where he was in torment,
he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off
and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me.
Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue,
for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied, 'My child,
remember that you received what was good during your lifetime
while Lazarus likewise received what was bad;
but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.
Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established
to prevent anyone from crossing
who might wish to go from our side to yours
or from your side to ours.'

He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him
to my father's house,

for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them,
lest they too come to this place of torment.'

But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets.
Let them listen to them.'

He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham,
but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

Then Abraham said,
'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets,
neither will they be persuaded
if someone should rise from the dead.'"