

**GOSPEL**

*Luke 16:19-31*

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

'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. 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." "My son," Abraham replied "remember that during your life good things come your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. 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."

'The rich man replied, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning, so that they do not come to this place of torment too." "They have Moses and the prophets," said Abraham "let them listen to them." "Ah no, father Abraham," said the rich man "but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." 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."

**HOMILY OF POPE LEO XIV**

*28 September 2025*

The words of Jesus convey to us how God sees the world, at every moment and in every place. We heard in the Gospel (Lk 16:19-31) that his eyes observe a poor man and a rich man: seeing one dying of hunger and the other gorging himself in front of him, the elegant clothes of one and the sores of the other licked by dogs (cf. Lk 16:19-21). But the Lord looks into the hearts of people, and through his eyes, we can also recognize one who is in need and one who is indifferent. Lazarus is forgotten by the one right there before him, just beyond the doorway of his house, and yet God is close to him and remembers his name. On the other hand, the man who lives in abundance is nameless, because

he has lost himself by forgetting his neighbor. He is lost in the thoughts of his heart: full of things and empty of love. His possessions do not make him a good person.

The story that Christ tells us is, unfortunately, very relevant today. At the doorstep of today's opulence stands the misery of entire peoples, ravaged by war and exploitation. Through the centuries, nothing seems to have changed: how many Lazaruses die before the greed that forgets justice, before profits that trample on charity, and before riches that are blind to the pain of the poor! Yet the Gospel assures us that Lazarus' sufferings will come to an end. His pains end just as the rich man's revelry ends, and God does justice to both: "The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried" (v. 22). The Church tirelessly proclaims this word of the Lord, so that it may convert our hearts.

Dear friends, by a remarkable coincidence, this same Gospel passage was also proclaimed during the Jubilee of Catechists in the Holy Year of Mercy. Addressing pilgrims who had come to Rome for the occasion, Pope Francis emphasized that God redeems the world from all evil by giving his life for our salvation. God's saving work is the beginning of our mission because it invites us to give of ourselves for the good of all. The Pope said to the catechists: this is the center by "which everything revolves, this beating heart which gives life to everything is the Paschal proclamation, the first proclamation: the Lord Jesus is risen, the Lord Jesus loves you, and he has given his life for you; risen and alive, he is close to you and waits for you every day" (Homily, 25 September 2016). These words help us to reflect on the dialogue in the Gospel between the rich man and Abraham. The rich man's plea to save his brothers becomes a call to action for us.

Speaking with Abraham, the rich man exclaims: "If someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent" (Lk 16:30). Abraham replies: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (v. 31). Well, one has risen from the dead: Jesus Christ. The words of Scripture, therefore, do not seek to disappoint or discourage us, but to awaken our conscience. Listening to Moses and the Prophets means remembering God's commandments and promises, whose providence never abandons anyone. The Gospel announces to us that everyone's life can change because Christ rose from the dead. This event is the truth that saves us; therefore, it must be known and proclaimed. But that is not enough; it must be

loved. It is love that leads us to understand the Gospel, for love transforms us by opening our hearts to the word of God and to the face of our neighbor.

In this regard, as catechists you are those disciples of Jesus who become his witnesses. The name of your ministry comes from the Greek verb *katēchein*, which means “to teach aloud, to make resound.” This means that the catechist is a person of the word – a word that he or she pronounces with his or her own life. Thus, our first catechists are our parents: those who first spoke to us and taught us to speak. Just as we learned our mother tongue, so too the proclamation of the faith cannot be delegated to someone else; it happens where we live, above of all in our homes, around the family table. When there is a voice, a gesture, a face that leads to Christ, the family experiences the beauty of the Gospel.

We have all been taught to believe through the witness of those who believed before us. From childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, and even old age, catechists accompany us in our faith, sharing in this lifelong journey, similar to what you have done in these days on this Jubilee pilgrimage. This dynamic involves the whole Church. As the People of God brings men and women to faith, “the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down [grows]. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth” (Dei Verbum, 18 November 1965, 8). In this communion, the Catechism is the “travel guidebook”

that protects us from individualism and discord, because it attests to the faith of the entire Catholic Church. Every believer cooperates in her pastoral work by listening to questions, sharing in struggles, and serving the desire for justice and truth that dwells in the human conscience.

This is how catechists teach – literally in Italian, by “leaving a mark.” When we teach the faith, we do not merely give instructions, but we place the word of life in hearts, so that it may bear the fruits of a good life. To Deacon Deogratias, who asked him how to be a good catechist, Saint Augustine replied: “Explain everything in such a way that the one who listens to you, by listening may believe; by believing may hope; and by hoping may love” (Instructing Beginners in Faith, 4, 8).

Dear brothers and sisters, let us take this invitation to heart! Let us remember that no one can give what they do not have. If the rich man in the Gospel had shown charity to Lazarus, he would have done good not only for the poor man but also for himself. If that nameless man had faith, God would have saved him from all torment. But his attachment to worldly riches robbed him of the hope for the true and eternal good. When we too are tempted by greed and indifference, the many “Lazaruses” of today remind us of Jesus’ words. They serve as an effective catechesis for us, especially during this Jubilee, which is for all a time of conversion and forgiveness, of commitment to justice, and of sincere search for peace.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



**Head:** Why do you think Jesus puts Lazarus (the forgotten, poor man) at the centre of this parable, and leaves the rich man nameless? What does this reveal about how God sees human worth?



**Heart:** If you heard this parable as a personal warning from God, where do you feel most challenged in your own heart — in trust, repentance, or obedience?



**Hands:** How might this story move you to live differently this week — not only in how you use money, but in how you listen to God’s Word and let it shape your daily choices?

## PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.