

'LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN TODAY' – HOMILY - 25 SEPTEMBER 2016

Who is **LAZARUS** today??

Is he a family who will lose their home, lifestyle, work and heritage because of climate change?

Is Lazarus the women who are denied their rights, dignity and future?

Is Lazarus the children denied clean water while others waste it?

Is Lazarus those who have been sexually abused while those in authority fail to be responsible?

Is Lazarus an unborn child with no advocate to speak up for his or her life?

Is Lazarus an elderly person in a nursing home and whose family never visit?

Is Lazarus the children suffering mental health problems in immigration detention centres?

Each of us could add to the list.

Who is the **RICH MAN** today?

How might we be like the Rich Man?

Who do we ignore?

Do we judge ourselves by our possessions and status, and look down on others?

In what way are we as Australians, like the rich man in the parable?

This parable stands out among other parables, as Jesus deliberately gives the poor man a name, Lazarus.

The rich man is not given a name. His five brothers are not given names.

Lazarus dies and we find him at rest with Abraham.

Then the rich dies.

Only in death, when the rich man wants help for himself, or for his brothers, does the rich man call Lazarus by his name.

Do we respect others only when we want something from them?

Do we value people only when they are useful to us?

Naming in the biblical sense includes a relationship.

Lazarus is in a relationship with God.

The Rich Man is not. He could have been. He could have repented like the prodigal son, but he never did.

The Rich Man has had so many opportunities to reach out to his neighbour, Lazarus, but never did.

How many times do we feel prompted by God to help someone or some group of people, and haven't?

As the Gospel parable develops, we can see that if the **RICH MAN** had truly helped Lazarus, he would have helped himself too.

To grow in love, we need to love.

There are so many situations today of Lazarus.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY AUSTRALIA 25th SEPTEMBER 2016

In the introduction to this year's Bishops' Statement 'a place at the table - Social Justice in an Ageing Society' we hear that:

"At this time in Australia, we face a threefold challenge:

To work for an inclusive society that brings older people into the heart of the community;

To ensure the dignity and care of people who are frail and most vulnerable to neglect or abuse;

And to foster solidarity among all generations, recognising the special affinity that exists between young and old"

We wonder how those hearing this parable responded.

Realising that life on earth for Lazarus could have been very different if the Rich Man had helped him.

God can answer someone else's prayer by choosing us as part of God's response.

This week we received **THREE** letters, from South Sudan, Blackall and Brisbane, indicating that we, as a community, are part of the prayer of others.

That God is working through us and others to answer someone else's prayer.

NEWS FROM BLACKALL 12th SEPTEMBER 2016

Moira writes to us from St Patrick's Parish, Blackall,

"To again say "thank you"!

First there came Maurice and Glenda, then John and Sharyn!

How wonderful it has been to meet you!

Thanks for coming on the long journey out west to be with us.

You have indeed brought light and hope!

... Your financial and in-kind support has been a tremendous boost to our morale and most importantly food on the table for hungry children.

... Your spare P.A system has magically enhance the sound of music at our masses, thanks to your amazing John and Sharyn and Joe and Corrie who ensured it arrived here safely...

... We look forward to welcoming more of you before the end of 2016 as I have heard loud noises about people coming to our Incredible Christmas Fete on the 26th November."

NEWS FROM SR RITA IN SOUTH SUDAN 16 SEPTEMBER 2016

"We reap an advantages of living in isolation...we are spared the home invasions, raids etc. We all know each other and though there are different ethnic groups we still maintain peace. A few small incidences of cattle raids, a few ethnic skirmishes reach the court but for the main we are very peaceful. Disadvantages of travel, inconveniences of transporting goods and personnel are far out-weighed by the many positives....

Allow me now a small space for a little trumpet blowing for our ... efforts and accomplishments.

Our two schools, both Primary and Secondary have reopened for Term 3, both maintaining their enrolments;

the Primary beginning Term 3 with over 1,000 and the Secondary still just above 300. ...

The hospital also is fully operational with malaria, especially among the children topping the list of ailments. Sadly HIV and AIDS is strongly alive among us with its consequential deaths. Yesterday we buried one such patient. Today we buried a small boy 4 years old...malaria...living in very close proximity to the hospital...people become so used to malaria they forget its devastating consequences.

Our agriculture gardens have produced well...with the highest demand being for okra, maize, tomatoes. Thankfully these crops produced abundantly. With the super abundance of tomatoes and guavas jam making time has returned. Many ladies have now acquired the skills for preserves but the problem is that 500 grams of sugar is 100ssp which unless one has access to US\$ is unaffordable. Besides, people are still emerging from hunger months so what is produced now goes immediately to the table. Sincere gratitude for your continued funding assistance which enables ... County to continue its peaceful and effective presence.

*The one project awaiting completion is the irrigation garden. We still await two simple items. 50 metres of ¾ inch plastic hose and 100 metres of fine strong rope to suspend the submersible pump.... For the time being the wet season is tapering off with sufficient rain to keep crops alive.
Blessings to all and again thank you for your great generosity which seems never to waver despite times becoming increasingly difficult for you. “*

NEWS FROM SR MILADA, Missionary of Charity, in Brisbane.

Sister wrote in response to our \$200 parish donation, at the time of Mother Teresa's canonisation, to their work in Brisbane.

*“Thank you for your donation which will help us to spread God's love and compassion among the poorest of the poor.
May God reward you for your love and concern for the poor.
We remember your intentions daily in our prayer.”*

As we reflect on Lazarus and the help that the Rich Man neglected to give in the parable:
We thank Sister Rita in South Sudan,
Moiria in Blackall Parish,
And Sister Milada in Brisbane,
For allowing us to be part of their journey.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – 'Lazarus and the Rich Man Today' – 25 September 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/092516.cfm>]