

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET AMOS

Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts:

‘Woe to those who are at ease in Sion,
and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria.

‘Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory
and stretch themselves out on their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock
and calves from the midst of the stall,
who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp
and like David invent for themselves instruments of music,
who drink wine in bowls
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile,
and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away.’

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS:

My soul, give praise to the LORD.

It is the LORD who does justice to those who are
oppressed.

It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the LORD who sets prisoners free.

My soul, give praise to the LORD.

It is the LORD who opens the eyes of the blind,
the LORD who raises up those who are bowed down.
It is the LORD who loves the just,
the LORD who protects the stranger.

My soul, give praise to the LORD.

The LORD upholds the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.

The LORD will reign for ever,
your God, O Sion, from age to age.

My soul, give praise to the LORD.

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO TIMOTHY

O man of God, pursue righteousness, godliness,
faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called
and about which you made the good confession
in the presence of many witnesses.

I charge you in the presence of God,
who gives life to all things,
and of Christ Jesus,

who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good
confession,

to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach
until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which he will display at the proper time —

he who is the blessed and only Sovereign,
the King of kings and Lord of lords,

who alone has immortality,
who dwells in unapproachable light,

whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honour and eternal dominion.

Amen.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus Christ, though he was rich,
yet for your sake he became poor,
so that you by his poverty might become rich.
Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

At that time: Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table.

Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side.

The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.”

But Abraham said, “Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not do so, and none may cross from there to us.”

And he said, “Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house — for I have five brothers — so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.”

And he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.”

He said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

THE REFLECTION

I can walk to Wimbledon rail station easily, one day I was on my way as the elected representative of the 20 priests in the area to the Diocesan Council of priests. I glanced at and walked past an elderly lady pulling a shopping trolley, I registered she had to drag it as it had no wheels. I got to the meeting on time. Another time I saw her was from my bike so could not stop as I had no lock on it. I haven't forgotten it in 20 years.

“And in what I have failed to do” is the one really new phrase in the 1965 mass. My fundamental lack of love of neighbour was based on my eagerness to do well and a lack of care.

Today's wealthy man may not have even noticed Lazarus, probably dirty and licked by stray dogs. He died and was buried finding himself separated from the presence of kingdom of heaven. But being able to see and call out, Abraham notices him and tells him that an unbridgeable divide separates them. It's too late now, he has been placed on the other side.

5 years ago, I asked the confirmation candidates to write about an action motivated by their Christian faith, the girls all said they had spoken to another girl who was lonely, the boys that they had bought a cup of coffee for a beggar on Wimbledon Broadway. It is little things that we do well which make us know we will try to do again. We can build up the virtue of courage by repetition. What we fail to do and then if we think about what we should have done we are more likely to do next time, perhaps disappointed in ourselves the first-time round.