

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C

(Amos 6:1a, 4-7; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Luke 16:19-31)

Excerpts of Pope Francis - 29 September 2022

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Brothers and sisters, the Lord gathers us around his table, making himself bread for us. And yet, the Gospel we have just listened to tells us that bread is not always shared on the table of the world: this is true; bread is not always broken in justice. Let us pause before the dramatic scene described by Jesus: on one side a rich man dressed in purple, who exhibits his fine linen and extravagant feasts. On the other, a poor man covered in sores, who lies at the door hoping that some crumbs will fall from the table to satisfy his hunger. And faced with this contradiction, we wonder: to what does the sacrament of the Eucharist, source and summit of the Christian life, invite us?

Firstly, the Eucharist reminds us of *God's importance*. The rich man in the parable is not open to the relationship with God: he thinks only of his own well-being, of satisfying his needs, of enjoying life. And in so doing he has even lost his name. The Gospel does not say what he is called: he is named as the “rich man”, whereas it gives the poor man's name: Lazarus. Riches will even strip you of your name. Self-satisfied, drunk with money, dulled by the pride of vanity, in his life there is no place for God because he worships only himself. It is not by chance that his name is not given: he has lost his identity that is given to him only by the goods he possesses.

How sad this reality is still here even today, when we confuse what we are with what we have, when we judge people by the wealth they have, the titles and the roles they hold, or by the brand of clothing they wear. The poor man, on the contrary, has a name, Lazarus, which means “God helps”. Despite his condition of poverty and marginalization, Lazarus can keep his dignity intact because he lives in relationship with God. In his very name there is something of God, and God is the unshakeable hope of his life.

Here then is the ongoing challenge that the Eucharist offers to our life: to worship God and not ourselves. To put him at the centre, and not the vanity of self. To remind ourselves that only the Lord is God and everything else is a gift of his love. Because if we worship ourselves, we die suffocated by our small selves; if we worship the riches of this world, they take possession of us and make us slaves. When, on the other hand, we adore the Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist, we also receive a new outlook on our lives: I am not the things I possess or the successes I manage to achieve; the value of my life does not depend on how much I can show off, nor does it diminish when I fall and fail. I am a beloved child, each one of us is a beloved child; I am blessed by God; He wanted to clothe me with beauty and he wants me free from all slavery.

Let us remember this: he who worships God does not become a slave to anyone: he is free. The rich man of the Gospel fails in this task: he does not notice the silent cry of poor Lazarus, who lies exhausted at his door. Only at the end of life does he finally notice Lazarus, but Abraham tells him, “Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed” (*Lk 16:26*). Yes, in selfishness we create an abyss. It was the rich man who dug an abyss between himself and Lazarus during earthly life, and now, in eternal life, that abyss remains. Yes, our eternal future depends on this present life.

Brothers and sisters, it is painful to see that this parable is still the story of our times: injustices, disparities, the earth’s resources distributed unequally, the abuses perpetrated by the powerful against the weak, indifference to the cry of the poor, the abyss that we dig every day, all these things cannot leave us indifferent. And so today, Jesus asks us to work to make an effective conversion: conversion from indifference to compassion, conversion from waste to sharing, conversion from selfishness to love.

We need to be a Church that is not only on our knees before the Eucharist and worships with awe the Lord present in the bread; but also knows how to bend with compassion and tenderness before the wounds of those who suffer, lifting up the poor, wiping away the tears of those who suffer, making us the bread of hope and joy for all. Because there is no true Eucharistic worship without compassion for the many “Lazaruses” who even today walk beside us.

While injustice and discrimination against the poor continue to take place in the world, Jesus gives us the Bread of sharing and sends us out daily as apostles of justice, apostles of peace. While this earthly existence of ours is being consumed, the Eucharist anticipates the promise of the resurrection and guides us towards the new life that conquers death. And when hope is extinguished and we feel within us an inner fatigue, the torment of sin, the fear of failure, let us again return to the taste of bread. We are all sinners: each one of us bears his or her own sins. However, Jesus is the only one who defeats death and always renews our life.

Brothers and sisters, we do have a name. We are a Eucharist people. True wealth lies in justice, compassion, sharing, caring without borders. May this Eucharist make us bread of hope and joy for all.