We Welcome You To  
St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church  
A Warm, Welcoming, Inclusive Faith Community  
Served by the Carmelites  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2019  
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
1490 19th Street (Church)  
LOCATED ON THE NE CORNER OF 19TH & CONNECTICUT STREETS

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FEED THE HUNGRY  
There is a wonderful opportunity to feed the hungry in our community. An Interfaith Church group provides a winter shelter program for homeless men. The men are housed in various religious buildings. Many different religious communities take turns providing a hot meal for the 75 to 100 men that are housed for the night.

A prayer group at St. Teresa’s has been doing this ministry for several years now. It has been an eye-opening, and heartwarming experience. The meal is sometimes prepared as a group at the Church kitchen, sometimes individuals prepare food at home and meet to serve. Lots of details to come, but please do calendar the dates and consider sharing your time and talents for this much needed work.

We sure could use your help!

January 29, 2020 – 5 pm at St. Marks Lutheran, 1111 O’Farrell Street, San Francisco, CA 94109  
February 12, 2020 – 5 pm at First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St, San Francisco, CA 94109

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Lynn Jacklevich—kg6cev@yahoo.com  
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THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

This year the majority of our Sunday gospels are taken from Luke, and today’s parable – the Rich Man and Lazarus – is unique to Luke’s gospel. The parable consists of two parts. The first describes the lives and fates of two men, the rich man and Lazarus; and the second describes when, after his death, the rich man voices concern about the fate of his five brothers.

With Jesus’ audience would have been quite familiar with the first part of this parable. Folklore from a number of different cultures includes a story of a wicked rich man and a pious poor man whose fortunes are reversed after death. With the reversal of fortune, we are quick to conclude that the rich man is punished for being rich and the poor man is rewarded for being poor. Unfortunately, the meaning of today’s parable is nowhere nearly that simple or straightforward.

When Jesus tells the story, he subtly omits two details: the rich man is not portrayed as lazy that he was rich; rather, his sin was that he was completely oblivious to the presence of the poor man at his doorstep. When the text notes that the beggar Lazarus was “covered with sores,” the hearer would realize that, under Jewish law, Lazarus was ritually unclean. If the rich man should touch Lazarus, he, too, would become ritually unclean.

The second part of the parable opens the door for the “twist” that allows a different, nuanced interpretation. This part is decidedly Jewish in that Lazarus now rests in the bosom of Abraham while the rich man is tormented in the abode of the dead. The two are separated by a great abyss that cannot be crossed, and the rich man offers a final plea:

“Father, I ask you then, send him (Lazarus) to my father’s house where I have five brothers. Let him be a warning to them so that they may not end in this place of torment.”

Abraham answered, “They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.”

The rich man indicates that his brothers will not repent unless someone (Lazarus) would go to them from the dead. Abraham’s reply – “If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.” – is a not-so-subtle rebuke of those hearers of the parable who will not recognize the legitimacy and authority of Jesus.

The “Jewish twist” to the parable challenges us to analyze and interpret it in light of the Hebrew prophetic tradition. The prophets emphasized that God’s chosen people included both rich and poor, and that there was a moral obligation on the wealthy and powerful to “show mercy” to the poor, (i.e., to take care of them). We see this in today’s first reading when Amos begins “Woe to the complacent in Zion!” before railing against the rich, not because they are rich, but because they revel in their wealth and are completely oblivious to the poor. This prophetic theme is echoed by Jesus, who understands himself as being in continuity with Israel’s prophetic tradition.

Given this insight, today’s Gospel can be seen in a different light. The rich man and Lazarus, although worlds apart with respect to wealth, nevertheless have something in common: both are members of God’s chosen people. As such, the rich man has the moral obligation to attend to Lazarus, and the fact that he is oblivious to the beggar at his doorstep indicates that he is not fulfilling the imperative demanded by the covenant. The rich man finds himself “in this place of torment,” not because he is rich, but because he fails to live up to the demands of the covenant.

Michael Kwiecien, O. Carm.