

September 25, 2016  
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Cycle C

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Amos 6: 1a, 4 – 7.

*God is not happy with complacency.*

Psalm 146:7, 8 – 9, 9 – 10.

*Praise the Lord, my soul*

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1 Timothy 6: 11 – 16.

*God expects perseverance until God's Son comes again.*

Gospel: Luke 16: 19 – 31.

*God transforms poverty to true wealth.*

It is one of us

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

Let me try something here. Would all those who do not need or are not seeking forgiveness for something, please raise your hand. Raise them high so I can see you. Oh? Well I guess that makes us all, no matter the status we hold, part of the human family, and that is a beautiful thing! If there was anyone who had their hand up, I was going to tell them they could go home; then they too would be in need of forgiveness.

I believe it was on Tuesday, in his homily for the day, Pope Francis laid out the virtues that every Christian must possess. He had 3 on his list: at the top forgiveness, in the middle LOVE, and on the bottom generosity. As Christian we must stop judging the other and recognize that we are all brothers and sisters striving to be one with our heavenly Father. Judgment just gets in our way and throws up so many walls. He then added "To ignore the poor is to despise God."

Greg Boyle, S.J., who has worked with gang members in Los Angeles for many years, encourages us to step over the abyss and stand skin to skin next to each other. He says no daylight should separate us, "only kinship – inching ourselves closer to creating a community of kinship such that God might recognize it." It is that kinship that Jesus invites us into. Our world is too divided and often we isolate ourselves into Us and Them. Fr. Boyle's kinship eliminates the divisions between us. We are challenged to see Jesus in each other and to recognize the sacred humanity that we share with every other person. That is why at this table all are welcome!

When we read or hear a news headline, maybe we could substitute "One of us" for the name: i.e.: one of us was gunned down by a policeman, a spouse, a neighbor; one of us was found dead in our home; one of us robbed a bank, a liquor store, a gas station; one of us was

severely burned in a home fire; one of us is sentenced to life in prison; you get the idea, let's establish that kinship. Let us begin acting like members of God's family!!

If it is one of us, it is more difficult to be complacent, or to ignore the other person as Dives, the rich man in today's reading, did to Lazarus, whom the dogs did not ignore. How magnificently Jesus turns the tale to show how God blesses poverty with true wealth in the long run. How another rich man, Abraham, understands this and holds Lazarus tenderly, gently in his bosom. Abraham not only welcomes and feeds him; but gives him a place at the table. Dives, even from his place of torment, could not recognize Lazarus as anyone other than for his service, "have Lazarus dip his finger in water and bring a drop to my lips." Abraham sees both as "one of us" and will allow none of it. Then Dives requests that Abraham send Lazarus to his blood brothers to warn them. Abraham reminds him and all of us we have all that we need. In our case we even have Jesus! One of us who rose from the dead, can we still ignore him, his teaching, his poverty turned to true wealth? What will it take for you and me to open our eyes to those who need us, who lack the love of God as channeled through us? Will we notice them if they are dressed well enough? Will we be persuaded if, as Abraham says in our Gospel, "someone should rise from the dead"? -- well someone has!

I would like to conclude with some words issued almost 50 years ago, 1967, by Pope Paul VI: "It is not simply a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. It is not enough to combat destitution, urgent and necessary as this is. The point at issue is the establishment of a human society in which everyone, regardless of race, religion, or nationality, can live a truly human life free from bondage imposed by humankind and the forces of nature not sufficiently mastered, a society in which freedom is not an empty word, and where Lazarus the poor man can sit at the same table as the rich man."\*

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

*Populorum Progressio*, 1967:47\*

our world, our city, our