

2025_09_28 Homily
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/092825.cfm>

One of the messages that we can get from the story of today's Gospel is about denial or acceptance. During our life, we live in a reality that we can either accept or deny. Many people in the world prefer to deny or ignore reality, because reality itself demands from us a commitment to get involved in changing what is wrong in the world. The rich man in today's gospel lived and dressed and ate well. But he ignored his own reality. He was indifferent towards the needs of his neighbors, and these sins became his obstacles to being saved.

We live and dress and eat well. But, as a nation, we have people starving at our gates. Like the brothers of the rich man, we have the words of Moses and of the Prophets - and even the Gospel of the One who rose from the dead - inviting us to love and serve one another, to pay attention to the needs of the poor and to be generous with the vulnerable: But we still we remain unconvinced of our need to do anything about it. We all tend to ignore our reality and prefer to blame others for what is wrong in the world. Also, as Christians, we embrace a faith without connection to reality and without commitment to transforming our small worlds. It is a "Comfortable Catholicism." We just come to Mass, give few dollars for the offertory, and go back home, thinking that we are good Catholics. We have a faith with no demands. We want to embrace forgiveness without repentance, salvation without any sacrifice, eternity without the tithe.

Yes, it's an easy faith. But it's not discipleship. We like a faith that is more about what we want or need, but not about what Jesus demands. Pope Benedict XVI said, "Remember that you are not called to comfort: You are called to greatness. But we may prefer the comfort that comes when we ignore our neighbors, or when we are blind to the needs of the poor. The rich man in today's Gospel is not condemned for living well, but for sharing poorly, for ignoring what happened at the gate of his house. In similar ways, we have all kinds of people around us trying to survive in this economic crisis, seeking to be loved, accepted and cared for. But we don't bother to know them. We can live comfortably and happily in our own little world and pretend that Jesus didn't say anything about being a good neighbor. But Jesus did, and because He did, we may need to select other choices.

We are living in denial if we believe we have no responsibility for the least and lowest in our world. It is so sad to realize how indifferent many Christians have become to the people at the bottom of society. The Gospel calls us to see the face of Jesus Christ in all our neighbors and to pay especial attention to the poor and the lonely, to the suffering and distressed, to those on the margins of society.

Dear brothers and sisters: This gospel reminds us that death truly is the great equal opportunity to conclude every person's life. The rich man was surprised when he died, because he found out how he wasted his life by ignoring poor Lazarus at his door. We could be surprised too. We have a choice to make before we die: denial or discipleship. Denial is simply about our personal pleasure and desires. Discipleship means we are ready to serve the world and its needs before our life ends. We can embrace real, honest engagement in a life of service to be true, authentic disciples. We can also continue seeing each other with hate in this land, based on our differences in culture, languages, origin, religion and color of the skin. Or we can recognize the historical fact that this nation was born as an encounter of many different cultures. Since its beginnings it has been led by Christian ideals of communion and a Gospel that calls human beings to see each other as brothers and sisters with equal dignity, equal opportunities and equal responsibilities. We deny reality or we accept it. The choice is ours. And today's Gospel teaches us that our choice has eternal significance.

Amen.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 28th September 2025
Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
111th World Refugee and Migration Sunday

Celebrant: Sisters and brothers, as the Church marks her 111th World Refugee and Migration Sunday, we bring to the Lord the distress and hopes of all who must leave the lands of their birth.

1. May the appeals of Pope Leo on behalf of refugees, whose lives are in constant danger because of war and violence and are reduced to poverty and hunger, be heard by the leaders of nations.

We pray to the Lord.

2. May migrants, who leave their homelands in the hope of a new future for their families, be accepted and have the opportunity to contribute to the harmony of their new land.

We pray to the Lord.

3. May our catechists experience new energy for their mission to teach and witness to Jesus and so build up the unity of the Church.

We pray to the Lord.

4. May the work which has taken place at the 80th General Assembly of the United Nations bear the fruit of peace and justice everywhere, especially in Palestine and Israel, Ukraine and Russia, Sudan, Myanmar and Haiti.

We pray to the Lord.

5. May we all take to heart the meaning of Jesus' parable today, and so care for the poor, trust in God and be humble in life.

We pray to the Lord.

6. May refugees who have died on their journey to freedom, in the harsh conditions of their war-torn countries, and in the poverty of refugee camps, find an eternal home with God.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Eternal God, give us the grace to recognize your Son, Jesus, in the person of the poor and needy, so that what we do for Him in them, will be grace for them and us.

Through Christ our Lord.