

Sunday homily-26-C6 by Fr. Gabor 2019.09.29

Today's 1st reading and the Gospel reading connect to Jesus' great warning in last Sunday's Gospel that you cannot serve both God and the Mammon.

However today Jesus extends this warning to say that you cannot be a slave (**serve**) both of your neighbour and of the Mammon/riches, and this is what He is trying to tell us through the story of the rich man and Lazarus. We don't know what type of person the rich man is; a Pharisee or a Scribe, a Rabbi or an ordinary member of society, but that doesn't matter, because perhaps Jesus is referring to anybody who is rich materially or spiritually.

I believe it is more important to understand who is a rich man in Biblical understanding, because we tend to think merely of those who have a lot of money in the bank or 'under the bed'. The first reading and the Gospel reading explain it and go beyond this narrow understanding. They are addressed to different types of rich people, such as those who work very hard to be well known or famous in the eyes of the world, and the opinion of the world matters most to them. Also in accord with the first reading the rich men are those who have secured their lives by hoarding up materials, and eat and get drunk and live in luxury, but at the same time don't care about the rest of society who are suffering, and the rich are also the arrogant who think more of themselves than who they really are.

Who are the poor in Biblical understanding? Those who suffer materially or spiritually or both, because they are neglected by those through whom the Father wants to bless them. The poor are our fellow citizens towards whom we have a duty, because they also carry Christ in themselves (cf. Mt 25: 31-46).

The problem is not with having riches, such as money, knowledge, fame or even spiritual riches, but the big problem is when you don't relate properly to these riches. Last week Jesus said that we need to hate riches, in other words we need to be completely detached from riches. At the same time we need to use riches wisely (Lk 16:9) for the benefit of those in real need (cf. Lk 12:33), and this is what He tells us through today's Gospel. Riches are a blessing, a gift, but they are not to be kept; rather they are to be passed on to others, and not to be possessed. God chooses people to pour out His blessings and to show His love through those to whom He gives a lot, so that they pass it on to those who are the addressees. So in this sense we are like postmen whose duty is to pass on the parcel to the addressee, namely the poor, and not to keep the parcel for ourselves.

The question is: do you possess what you have received, or does it possess your soul, your heart? Is your whole life about hoarding up riches, like good reputation, luxury, food or drink, just like the life of those who haven't really found the real treasure that gives meaning to their whole life? Do these riches dictate your life

and your decisions? Are you a slave of them or you use them for the benefit of others, to bless others with the blessings you have received? The Father wants to bless others spiritually and sometimes materially through the blessings you have received.

The rich man's soul was ruined, because He didn't pass on to Lazarus the blessings that he had received. This is obvious from the fact that He became insensitive to the suffering of Lazarus. Are you also becoming insensitive to the needs of others around you, let it be material or spiritual needs?

If you have children or grandchildren, a wife or a husband, don't only feed them physically, but also spiritually with the prayers and spiritual riches that you have received: pray together and encourage each other spiritually, and so let the spiritual riches, the blessings of God, flow between yourselves as a family. Also affirm your child or grandchild in his or her identity as your child and God's beloved child! Don't only discipline them! And don't only focus on your own family! Look further afield and teach your child how to be a good neighbour, a 'postman' of the blessings they have received, and so you will give more meaning both to your child's life, to those in need and to your own life, and most of all you will be a source of God's blessings for others. Pray that the Holy Spirit guide you in your efforts!