

# Gratitude Foundation

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*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?  
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

## The Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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*“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”*

(1 Thess: 5:18)

# Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Reading 1

### Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Thus says the LORD the God of hosts:  
Woe to the complacent in Zion!  
Lying upon beds of ivory,  
stretched comfortably on their couches,  
they eat lambs taken from the flock,  
and calves from the stall!  
Improvising to the music of the harp,  
like David, they devise their own accompaniment.  
They drink wine from bowls  
and anoint themselves with the best oils;  
yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph!  
Therefore, now they shall be the first to go into exile,  
and their wanton revelry shall be done away with.

## Responsorial Psalm

### Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

**R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!**

Blessed is he who keeps faith forever,  
secures justice for the oppressed,  
gives food to the hungry.  
The LORD sets captives free.

**R. Praise the Lord, my soul!**

The LORD gives sight to the blind;  
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.  
The LORD loves the just;  
the LORD protects strangers.

**R. Praise the Lord, my soul!**

The fatherless and the widow he sustains,  
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.  
The LORD shall reign forever;  
your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

**R. Praise the Lord, my soul!**

## **Reading 2**

### **1 Timothy 6:11-16**

But you, man of God, pursue righteousness,  
devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.  
Compete well for the faith.  
Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called  
when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses.  
I charge you before God, who gives life to all things,  
and before Christ Jesus,  
who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate for the noble confession,  
to keep the commandment without stain or reproach  
until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ  
that the blessed and only ruler  
will make manifest at the proper time,  
the King of kings and Lord of lords,  
who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light,  
and whom no human being has seen or can see.  
To him be honor and eternal power. Amen.

## **Alleluia**

### **Cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, he became poor,  
so that by his poverty you might become rich.  
**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

# Gospel

## Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day.

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table.

Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died,

he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me.

Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied,

'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime

while Lazarus likewise received what was bad;

but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.

Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'

He said, 'Then I beg you, father,

send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them,

lest they too come to this place of torment.'

But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets.

Let them listen to them.'

He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham,

but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

# Exegesis

## Amos 6:1a, 4-7

The Prophet Amos introduces himself in the first paragraph of the book. He is from the town of Tekoa which was in the territory of Judah in the north on the border with Israel, the Northern Kingdom. He was active during the reign of King Uzziah of Judah (783-742) and King Jeroboam of Israel (786-746). This was a time between the “storms” of the Assyrian domination and the Babylonian Exile. It was a time of great material prosperity for both Israel and Judah. It was a time of a great divide, a growing separation between the wealthy and the poor. Amos warned against the mistreatment of one’s neighbor. Cultic worship was alive and well during this period, but Amos proclaimed that Yahweh was deeply concerned that the people were not practicing their religion and loving their neighbor as they were called to do. There was a lack of social justice. The people in turn rejected the words of the Prophet and in doing so were rejecting Yahweh (2:12; 7:12-13). Amos warned that rejecting the word of Yahweh was in fact rejecting His guiding word (8:11-12).

Amos has stating clearly that he is not a traditional prophet following a lineage of prophets, but an ordinary shepherd chosen by God to share His message. His message was not popular. In fact, Amos is one of the prophets with the most negative and dire message of all. He warned of the wrath of God that would follow the moral degradation and infidelity that was rampant and the lack of the living out of one’s faith and keeping the commandments. Despite rejection Amos remained faithful to Yahweh, to his calling and to fulfilling the mission that was entrusted to him by Yahweh.

Our pericope today is taken from the sixth chapter which is titled in the NAB *The Third Woe* and in the ESV *Woe to those at Ease in Zion*. This warning to those at ease occurs several times in Sacred Scripture. “Tremble, you who are complacent! Shudder, you who are overconfident!” (Is 32: 11). “At that time, I will explore Jerusalem with lamps; I will punish the men who thicken on their lees, who say in their hearts, “Neither good nor evil can the Lord do.”” (Seph 1: 12). Later in the NT James confirms this woe: “Come now you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you, it will devour your flesh like a fire.” (James 5: 1). In His *Sermon on the Plain* Jesus states the woe very succinctly: “Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” (Lk 6: 24). In addition, Jesus states it very clearly in the parable of the *Rich Man and Lazarus*, our Gospel passage this weekend.

The concern that Amos preached was that those who had riches were failing to love their neighbor and especially those in need. The Covenant that God had established with Israel is based on the love of God, and the love of neighbor as oneself. The wonton disregard, the neglect and even the exploitation of the poor and vulnerable, Amos saw as an abomination.

In addition to their disregard for the poor, the rich seemed unconcerned about the fate of their own society, e.g., “Who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils. but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!” (Amos 6: 6)

The prophesy of Amos was years ahead of its time, as Israel was not conquered by Assyria until the year 738 B.C. In God’s time His prophesy through Amos came to fruition.

## Exegesis (Continued)

### Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Psalm 146 is an individual hymn of praise to God. It consists of 10 verses and is titled in the NAB *Trust in God the Creator and Redeemer* and in the ESV *Put Not Your Trust in Princes*. It begins and ends with the exclamation *Hallelujah!* *Hallelujah* is a Hebrew word that means to give exaltation with praise and thanksgiving. The entire psalm is a song of praise and thanksgiving to God as creator, as sustainer of life, and as savior.

In verse 1 the Hebrew word that is translated as *Lord* is *Yahweh*. The word that we translate as *soul* is *nepes*. The word that is translated as *God* also in verse 1 is *Elohim* in the original Hebrew. The word in verse 4 that is translated as *breath* or *breathing* is *ruah*. In this short song all three names for God that appear in the OT are present, i.e., *Yahweh*, *Elohim* and *Ruah*. *Yahweh* is typically used to describe the all-powerful transcendent creator God. *Elohim* appears more often when describing the immanent presence of God and *Ruah* appears to describe the Spirit of God as in the Spirit that hovered over the waters of creation. The glory of the Trinity of God flows from this song of praise and thanksgiving.

These words also are prevalent in the creation story specifically with the creation of humanity. The Lord (*Yahweh*) God (*Elohim*) formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed His life breath (*nesamah*) into him and man became a living being (*nepes*). (Gen 2:7). It is interesting that the word for breath in the creation story is *nesamah* which describes the natural flow of air in and out in the normal rhythm of breathing. The creation story tells us that this is God's breath flowing into human nostrils. Psalm 146 uses the word *ruah* for breath when describing real death, i.e. *breathing (ruah) his last and returning to earth*. The psalmist is describing the person who does not have *Yahweh* as their God and Savior, those who do not place their trust in God.

The psalm glories in our God *who keeps faith (emet) forever*. The understanding of *emet* and later the Greek NT translation *pistis*, connotes more than an ascent of the mind and heart, more than a creed that we recite. Faith describes a mutual indwelling presence of divine and human life in the soul (*nepes*). Psalm 146 sings glory and praise and thanksgiving to our triune God who creates, sustains life and is savior. *Yahweh* is a God who is faithful forever. He is a God who rescues the blind and the bowed down, who protects the alien, the orphan and the widow and who shall reign forever through all generations. *Hallelujah!*

Deuteronomy provides a nice summary of our Psalm pericope: "For the Lord, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome; who has no favorites, accepts no bribes; who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So, you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt." (Deut 10: 17-19).

## Exegesis (Continued)

### 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Our pericope is titled in the NAB *Exhortations to Timothy* and in the ESV *Fight the Good Fight of Faith*.

*But you, man of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.* Paul is calling on Timothy to distinguish and distance himself from the false teachers who were preaching but not practicing the faith. (See 1 Tim 6: 3-10). The designation *man of God* was used in the OT to describe a religious leader acting rightly in the name of God. “This is the blessing which Moses, the man of God, pronounced upon the Israelites before he died.” (Deut 33: 1). “A man of God came to Eli and said to him: ‘This is what the Lord God says...’” (1 Sam 2: 27). Paul is telling Timothy to flee the vises of the false prophets and to pursue virtue as exhorted in Proverbs. “The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves the man who pursues virtue.” (Prov 15: 9).

*Compete well for the faith.* St. Paul compares the drive for faith and righteousness and salvation as an athletic competition. “Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus, I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Cor 9: 24-27). “For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim 4: 6-7).

*Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses.* The Greek translated in this verse as *eternal life* is *aionios zoe*. *Aionios* means eternal, perpetual, forever or unending. The word *zoe* is distinct from the Greek word *bios* which describes biological life. *Zoe* is used to describe life in the Spirit. The breath of God is the source of this life or being. The confession of faith that Paul is describing is likely the profession that Timothy made at his baptism.

*I charge you before God, who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus.* The Greek word for *life* in this passage is *Zoogoneo*. *Zoogoneo* also implies that God is the source of his life. *Zoogoneo* means to keep alive, to preserve or sustain life.

*Who (Christ) gave testimony under Pontius Pilate for the noble confession,* “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the Truth. Everyone who belongs to the Truth listens to My voice.” (Jn 18: 37).

*Until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ that the blessed and only ruler will make manifest at the proper time.* “For the Lord Himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thes 4: 16). “As we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ.” (Tit 2: 13).

*The King of kings and Lord of lords.* There are many references to God as King of kings and Lord of lords in the OT. “To Daniel the king said, ‘Truly your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries; that is why you were able to reveal this mystery.’” (Dan 3: 47). “But the King of kings aroused the anger of Antiochus against the scoundrel.” (2 Mac 13: 4). Revelation applies this designation to Christ. “They will fight with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, for He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, and those with Him are called chosen and faithful.” (Rev 17: 14). “He has a name written in His cloak and on His thigh, ‘King of kings and Lord of lords.’” (Rev 19: 16).

## Exegesis (Continued)

### Luke 16:19-31

Our pericope today is the parable most often titled *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. This parable is unique to Luke's Gospel. It would seem that by the placement of this parable in Luke's Gospel shortly following the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*, that Jesus may have told this parable shortly thereafter. The significance of this follow-up parable is that there is time for repentance and there will be a time when it will be too late. The fact that Jesus includes the proper name, *Lazarus*, in this parable is unique.

After a brief introduction, our entire Gospel passage consists of the words of Jesus. He begins this parable in a similar way as the previous two, "There was a man," or "There was a rich man." This again suggests a connection between the three parables. The third adds some finality to the first two stories.

*"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day.* The rich man is sometimes referred to as *Dives*. *Dives* is the Latin Vulgate translation of *rich man*. *Purple garments* are a sign of royalty and wealth in sacred scripture. (see Judg 8:26; Sir 45:10; Esth 1:6; 8:15). The Greek words that are translated *dined sumptuously* are *euphraino lampros*. Another translation is *feasted luxuriously* or *extravagantly*. This phrase is used by Jesus in the parable of the *Prodigal Son* to describe the feast prepared by the father to welcome home his son and celebrate. It is typically designated for a very special occasion. The rich man dined this way every day!

*And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table.* The Greek word that is translated in this verse as *lying* is *ballo*. *Ballo* means to be dumped, thrown or cast. It suggests that the poor man must have been crippled as he was carried to the rich man's door. The name *Lazarus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew/Aramaic name *Eliezer*, which means *my God helps*. Another way to translate *would gladly have eaten his fill* is *he longed to be filled*. In the original Greek this expression is identical to the yearning of the Prodigal Son.

*When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.* Abraham is designated by God as our father in faith. As a father he will gather his children to himself. The word *bosom* in the original Greek is *kolpos*. In John's Gospel *bosom/kolpos* designates a place of intimacy.

*And he cried out, "Father Abraham, have pity on me."* It is interesting that the rich man recognized Fr. Abraham. Luke quotes John the Baptist revealing that claiming to have Abraham as our father is not enough. "Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance; and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God can raise up children of Abraham from these stones." (Lk 3: 8).

*Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.* It is interesting that the rich man knows Lazarus by name as well. This would seem to add to his dereliction of the poor man. He also still has a condescending mindset towards Lazarus by suggesting that he perform the servant's task of bringing him water.

## Exegesis (Continued)

### Luke 16:19-31

*But Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them."*

The following verses are among several found in the Law and the Prophets that address care for individuals who are poor or in need:

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not be so thorough that you reap the field to its very edge, nor shall you glean the stray ears of your grain. These things you shall leave for the poor and the alien. I, the Lord, am your God." (Lev 23: 22). "Be on your guard lest, entertaining the mean thought that the seventh year of relaxation, is near, you grudge help to your needy kinsman and give him nothing; else he will cry to the Lord against you, and you will be held accountable." (Deut 15: 9). "When you have finished setting aside all the tithes of your produce in the third year, the year of the tithes, and you have given them to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your own community, you may declare before the Lord, your God, 'I have purged my house of the sacred portion and I have given it to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, just as You have commanded me.'" (Deut 26: 13). "Woe to those who enact unjust statutes and who write oppressive decrees, depriving the needy of judgment and robbing My people's poor of their rights, making widows their plunder, and orphans their prey." (Is 10: 1-2). "This is rather the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own." (Is 58: 6-7).

On the road to Emmaus Jesus exalts the significance of the Law and the prophets. "Then beginning with Moses and the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures." (Lk 24: 27).

*He said, "Oh no, Father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."* The Greek word translated here as *repent* is *metanoia*. *Metanoia* describes the movement of the soul to reconnect with God, to turn away from sin and the lures of this world and turn toward God. The implication is that the rich man failed to repent. Unlike the Prodigal Son, he has no *metanoia* experience.

*Then Abraham said, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead."* The Greek word that is translated in this verse as *persuaded* is *peitho*. *Peitho* means to convince, persuade or win over. It also can mean to *trust* and is closely related to the Greek word for faith. The Greek verb for *rise* is *anistemi*. *Anistemi* is the word that Luke uses to describe the resurrection of Jesus. (See Lk 7:14; 9:7, 22; 20:37; 24:6, 34; Acts 3:7, 15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37).

## Reflection

Our Gospel this weekend is the parable of *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. This haunting parable follows the parable of *The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son* in the Gospel of Luke. The parables of the lost and found are filled with great joy and celebration. Our parable this weekend has a tone of sadness and regret.

Now is the time for the lost to be found. There will be a time when it will be too late, when time on earth stops for us. There is deep regret in the voice of the rich man. He is looking for a second chance, he would like to live it over, but it is too late. That message is clear. The regret is now eternal.

It is also clear that there is no excuse for the rich man not to have known better. He has no explanation as to why he did not see the poor man in need right at his doorstep. It would seem that he did nothing to hurt the man or cause his sad state in life. Yet, he knew Lazarus by name, he knew his situation, and did nothing to help him. His sin is the sin of omission, of apathy and of indifference. He made a choice not to get involved in the man's life. Now deep regret is heard in his voice.

The rich man has no excuse. Abraham reminds him that God has given us the great command to love God and love our neighbor. God gave us Moses and the prophets for a reason. "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." Now we really have no excuse! That event, a man rising from the dead, is fulfilled in Jesus, in His passion, death and resurrection. Jesus teaches us to love God through the nearest person in need. This must be our response to the love that we receive from God. So the message is clear, there are no excuses for inaction when someone that we know is in need. Our own eternal happiness depends on our response.

While parables of the lost and found conclude with eternal joy, today's parable focuses on a different outcome. I had a friend who once had a near death experience. He was given the gift of a second chance to fix the things that he needed to fix in his life. He did. He told me once that he knows what Hell is, it is eternal regret. The choice is ours, and it is a choice that we must make in the here and now and there are no excuses for inaction.

Guide us Holy Spirit as we pray: Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of us Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Glenn".

## Personal Witness

Many years ago, when I was still a practicing CPA, I knew a man who had a near-death experience. He was a successful businessman who was an extremely hard worker with a strong type A personality. His marriage was on the brink of divorce, and he was estranged from his oldest son who was once involved in the business but left because of conflict with his father.

Jim (not his real name) had a heart attack at work one morning. Because of the remote location it was some time before the ambulance arrived. The paramedics administered CPR on route to the hospital. After a lengthy code situation Jim was revived. After having open heart surgery and spending some time in the hospital Jim recovered. He was a changed person after the experience.

He stepped away from the business and turned it over to his oldest son who came back to his father while he was in the hospital. Jim also began to mend the relationship with his wife and other family members. Most importantly, Jim turned back to the Lord and his faith. He began to attend daily Mass at his local parish and even served Mass as he once did as a child.

I, and many others, notice a drastic change in Jim. One day he confided in me his experience. He said that things became very dark and cold. He said that as his life passed before him, he began to be filled with deep regret. He said that it was a pain to the extent that he had never felt before. Brokenness, even from his early childhood days came into his thoughts. He saw the face of a young girl that he had bullied in grammar school. The experiences of darkness and discord flowed forward to the present situation with his wife and son. At this point, he said that he begged the Lord for a chance to make amends for his sins and to reconcile his broken relationships. At that moment he said he began to feel warmth, and he felt enveloped by the most intense light that he had ever experienced. Enveloped in warmth and light he awakened to see the face of his wife and his children standing around his hospital bed holding his hands and praying.

Then he told me, "I now know what hell is. It is eternal regret." He lived the rest of his life, 22 years, filled with gratitude that he had been given a second chance. After making amends with his wife and son, he began to seek out other people in his life that he felt that he had hurt. This included the person that he had bullied as a child, others that had appeared in his vision, and even those that did not.

After the experience he confided in me that he no longer feared dying. He said that he lived every moment of every day as if it were his last. He lived the rest of his life filled with gratitude and God's love. He encouraged everyone that he encountered to live in right relationship with God, with spouse and family, and everyone, because you do not know the day or the hour of your death and you may not be so lucky as to get a second chance at making things right. This sounds to me like living the Gospel.

