

***Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time***  
***September 28, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“The rich man, in purple splendor, is not accused of being greedy or of carrying off the property of another, or of committing adultery, or, in fact, of any wrongdoing.”*  
*(Saint Jerome, On Lazarus and Dives.)*

In our reflection upon Saint Luke’s Gospel (Luke 16:19-31), we are offered the story of Lazarus and the un-named rich man. Many preachers have centered their sermons upon the contrast of these two characters. The rich man has everything at his disposal; whereas, Lazarus has nothing. One is healthy, full of life; while the other struggles through illness fighting for life. One receives the praises of honored guests; the other, the warm kiss of a dog’s tongue. Both die; but only one is mentioned to have been buried. Both must receive the embrace of an existence after death. For the rich man, his embrace consists of sufferings, pain and regret. For Lazarus, the comforting embrace of Father Abraham awaits his arrival. All of these contrasts, and many more, are exceptional areas for anyone’s reflection; yet, not for ours this day. For in the spiritual lives of all, each of us has been, at one time or another, the rich man, Lazarus or both at the same time. We could take the time to reflect upon how this is applicable to all; however, I will focus our reflection upon those times when we most embody the person of the rich man.

In the quote from Saint Jerome, found above, we are reminded of one important point: the rich man is not condemned due to any overtly sinful action. It has been rightly pointed out by others, the rich man is, most likely, punished due to his negligence toward his fellow man. Lazarus is not described as hidden in a corner or lying in an abandoned area of the town. He is placed at the gate of the rich man’s home. In essence, it is understood, though not directly stated, the rich man would have passed by him countless times as he entered or exited his home. We can rightly assert: he saw Lazarus, but he never truly stopped to look at Lazarus. Another way to explain this point, his glance was distracted.

When we speak of a distraction, it is understood to be a thought, person or thing which captivates our attention to such a degree that we have trouble concentrating on another thought, person or thing. In our spiritual lives, we may allow these distractions to overwhelm areas of growth in our relationship with God. We may see these areas as important (our child’s activities, our own “me time”) however, all these things serve a greater purpose to our continued spiritual progress.

I do not want you to think that our spiritual development dismisses important events in our lives and the lives of those we love. Our spiritual lives require we develop

the practice of daily recollection to guide our understanding. It can be as simple as one question: “Does this person, event, thought or thing bring me closer to God and thus closer to those I love or does it drive me further away?” Recollection seeks to move us past the daily distractions allowing us to center ourselves on what matters most – orienting our lives toward God. If the rich man had taken time for recollection, judging all things in light of God’s presence, then he would have seen to the needs of Lazarus because doing so would draw him closer to God. Lazarus is no longer the beggar; he is Jesus who sits outside his gate covered in sores. May we all take dedicated time each day to sit and ponder the question: “Does this lead me closer to God or move me further away?”