

**There was a rich man ..... (homily based on Luke 16:19-31) The Rich Man and Lazarus.**

- **The Rich man...I have a shirt-tail relative whose goal in life was to save \$1,000,000. He worked as a supervisor at a car company and retired. He moved down South with his wife and lived in an apartment. He was so bent on becoming rich that, rather than taking out some of his CDs from the bank and lose some interest on them, he made his wife live with orange crates as front room furniture. He died with his million dollars. But at what cost?**
- **We in America go about protecting our countries' riches: We spending billions of dollars to build a fence along our southern border to keep poor people out of our country.**
- **We Welcome immigrants into the USA to harvest our crops because they are cheap labor will we will not let them stay here.**
- **(Tell the story of comedic news man who recently went out into the fields for the harvest produce but could not even make it through one day because of the hard work.)**
- **People have always expressed their richness through buildings: In the middle ages it was through our cathedrals; in the 1950's thru 1980's it was in our shopping centers. Now it is through our casinos. We worship any way to get rich quick.**
- **It is not surprising that the first building which people found critical to open in New York after 9-11 was Wall Street, a symbol of our national wealth.**

**And whether we go about storing up a surplus like the rich fool of another parable in scripture who built extra barns to store the grain which he would never use, or whether we spend it freely like the prodigal son, both approaches are grounded in the belief that it is all ours, or at best ours and our family first, and that all that life has to offer is to be purchased and consumed before our time runs out.**

**Here is the Problem of wealth in the USA: half the people of our country as doing just fine. Half of us are just accumulating wealth living out our dreams. But what about the other half are negatively affected by current economic downturn? The other half are those who are young, minorities and without a college education. Should they simply be left behind?**

**The belief that we should be free to acquire wealth without any concern for others is contrary to what we believe at a Catholic, Christian community.**

**Here are some quotes from the Teaching of our Church**

- **God intended the earth and everything in it for the sake of all human beings. Thus, in justice, created goods should flow fairly to all. All other rights are subordinated to this principle (*Gaudium et Spes* 69,**
- **Wealth and possessions must be understood as ours to steward rather than to possess absolutely. (*Rerum Novarum* 18-19).**
- **No person (or nation) may have a surplus if others do not have the basic necessities (*Rerum Novarum* 19, *Quadregesimo Anno* 50-51, *Mater et Magistra* 119-121 & 157-165, *Popularum Progressio* 230). Thus, no one may appropriate surplus goods solely for his own private use when others lack the bare**

necessities for life. (*Popularum Progressio* 23). People are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and if a person is in extreme necessity he has the right to take from the riches of others what he needs (*Gaudium et Spes* 69).

- And, the condemnation of injustice is part of the ministry of evangelization and is an integral aspect of the Church's prophetic role (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 42).

(pause and invite the community to participate in the following questions.)

I have a few questions for you today:

**Where would you find Lazarus today? What would he or she look like?** (get the congregation's input)

Do you recognize and care for him or her as God's beloved child, or do you want to roll up your window when you see him or her coming?

**2. How does it help you to care for Lazarus?** (get the community's input.)

Compare and contrast the person who takes care of the poor with the complacent person in the First Reading, who sits around drinking wine and anointing him/herself all day with the best oils?

This third question is a rhetorical question for you to answer:  
**Where do you place yourself in today's gospel?**

Are you the rich man?... are you Lazarus, the poor man?

Maybe we are meant to be the relatives of the rich man who are left behind. We are told that they have Moses and the prophets (the

**bible) to learn from. We have the risen Lord in our midst. But, in the end, we still need to decide what we want to do with our lives.**

**There is only one God to spend eternity with, the God who *secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry*. The rich man in today's gospel attached himself to another god, and in the process he lost eternity.**

**What god are we attaching ourselves to?**

**PS. Story of Fr. Lloyd Thiel, Cap.**

**Former director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit for 14 years who died this past week at the age of eighty. “Fr. Lloyd was known as a compassionate and loyal friend of the down and out, he treated everyone with dignity and respect no matter if they were a local street person or the agency’s biggest donor.”**

**“He often admitted that working in the soup kitchen opened his eyes to the injustices against the poor.**

**Well done good and faithful servant. Go joyfully to meet your God who secures justice for the oppressed; gives food to the hungry.**