



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalms 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

## The Word In Liturgy

“Woe to the complacent in Zion!” The words of the prophet Amos ring out in the church today, warning of the destruction that awaits those who ignore God’s demand for justice. The wrath of God is raised, according to the prophet, by the callous self-indulgence of the wealthy. The rich are not depicted here as the cause of misfortune to the poor, as they are in the portrait of greed and corruption that was painted in last week’s reading from Amos. Rather, they are called to task for their culpable indifference to the needs of others. “Joseph” here refers to those who suffer injustice in the kingdom of Israel. The complacent in Zion, who “are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph,” are thus like Joseph’s brothers, who threw him into a cistern to die, and then sat down to a meal (Genesis 37:18-35). Sated with wealth and pleasures, they have closed their hearts to compassion, and so have earned the destruction that will fall on them at the hands of the Assyrian invaders.

In Luke’s Gospel, prior to the passage we hear today, some of the religious leaders have been characterized as “money-lovers.” They have rejected Jesus’ teaching about possessions and even mock him for it. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus speaks to such hardness of heart. In today’s parable, unique to Luke, two men’s lives and final destinies are contrasted. The rich man (sometimes called “Dives” in the tradition—dives means “rich” in Latin) feasts sumptuously every day, while the poor man, Lazarus, lies at his door starving. Lazarus is hungry, diseased, crippled and cries out for mercy, but he receives none from the rich man, who ignores him.

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After death, the fortunes of the two are reversed. Lazarus rests “in the bosom of Abraham,” i.e., close to the heart of great father of the Jewish people, while the rich man must endure the sufferings of the damned. Now it is he who must cry out for mercy. The scene as it is visualized in the parable would have been familiar to a Jewish audience. Belief in an afterlife did not come into Judaism until the second century B.C., but when it did, *sheol*, the abode of the dead, began to be imagined as having two separate compartments: one for the just, and one for the wicked. It was believed that one could see from one to the other, but not pass through the boundary between them.

The point of this parable is unmistakable. Care for the poor is a non-negotiable requirement of the covenant, attested by Moses and all the prophets. Those who choose to ignore this obligation will not fare well in the next life. Most chilling in the story is the specter of those whose hearts are so hardened that they will not listen “even if one should rise from the dead”—a clear allusion to those who will fail to be converted, even by the resurrection of Jesus.

# Catholic Doctrine



## ***Social Justice: Part II***

RCL Benziger

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Jesus uses a parable about a wealthy, indifferent man and a poor, needy beggar to teach compassion for others in this world before it is too late and we are judged in the next world. This Gospel text relates to our Catholic social teaching on justice and the creation of right relationships in society. Sinful inequalities affect millions of women and men throughout the world. That these inequalities have existed throughout history and in every society does not excuse them. The Catholic Church insists that these unequal conditions between individuals openly contradict the Gospel (CCC 1938).

The social teaching of modern popes has contributed to a quantum leap in the Catholic understanding of the role of individuals, groups and governments in promoting the common good (see Catholic Doctrine, 33 Sunday Ordinary Time, first paragraph, for a listing of this papal contribution). The Second Vatican Council also teaches, “Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace.” (GS, 29)

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The Catholic Church, in its social teaching on justice and human solidarity, witnesses to and

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works towards that vision of Jesus who never saw the distinctions between people, rich and poor, so much as he saw the distinctiveness of every child of God.

