

## **REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY SECOND WEEK OF LENT 2021**

**Jer 17:5-10 Luke 16:19-31**

In today's parable of the rich man and the poor man, Lazarus is the only character in any of the parables who is given a name. The name Lazarus means God is my help. He was a beggar; he was covered with sores and was so helpless that he could not even ward off the street dogs which pestered him.

Lazarus was about as poor as any person could be. Yet, in a sense, the rich man was poorer. Lazarus was suffering from material poverty. The rich man was suffering from poverty of heart. The rich man's heart was devoid of compassion and love.

From time to time all of us encounter poor people. I think it is true to say that most of us find such encounters disturbing and humbling experiences. Why is this?

They are disturbing because they arouse within us conflicting feelings of pity, discomfort, anger, and guilt. They are humbling because they make us realise that we too are poor, only in a different way. We are poor in compassion, poor in our willingness to help, poor in our capacity to love. In other words, poor at heart.

But our encounters with the poor can also be a blessing. They can act as a reminder to us that before God, all of us are poor. They can awaken within us feelings of tenderness and compassion. Thus, they can bring our heart to life, and enable us to enter the world of the poor and the excluded.

Sin is not just about doing wrong. It is also about not doing good. One of the greatest evils in the world is indifference towards one's neighbour.

There are so many bystanders in our world. As Christians, what is our response to the cry of the poor in our communities? If we see the needy as a burden, then we make ourselves poor in compassion and poor in love.

The only riches that are worth having are the riches of the heart. Jesus compares the heart to a storehouse. If we wish to know how wealthy we are, let us look into the storehouse of our heart. A compassionate heart is great wealth.

May God give us the grace to rise above our selfishness and keep us faithful to him and to one another.

Fr Patrick