The Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (KJV)

Believers today are immensely rich with freedom to worship in God's holy churches and monasteries. Libraries and bookstores as well as the internet offer books, publications and video messages about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The internet, television and radio offer around the clock religious services and broadcasts. Each person has abundant means to learn and grow in Christ. Each person decides whether to be attentive to the message of Christ.

The rich man in the present Gospel had Lazarus at his gate. Lazarus is at the gate of each person in daily life. Lazarus is the neighbor next door who is lonely or hungry or sick.

Lazarus is the co-worker on the job suffering with a severely ill family member or a difficult son or daughter. Lazarus is the person known to the believer with a hospitalized or imprisoned son or daughter.

Believers attentive to the Gospel will heed the Lazarus nearby and take action to show love, compassion and support. Attentive believers take the Gospel to heart and listen to Moses and the Prophets as well as the Risen Christ.

The Church teaches those individuals willing to learn and to grow in Christ. Growing in Christ results in the fullness of life. Growth in Christ continues throughout life and beyond for the willing and attentive.

The Gospel of the Rich Man and Lazarus is proclaimed each year because God loves each person. God does not want individuals to suffer like the rich man in the Gospel. God wants people to pay attention to the message of the Gospel.

Jesus Christ's Resurrection is proclaimed through the centuries. Jesus' identification with the sick, suffering, needy and imprisoned is verified in the Church constantly.

The way each person responds to the sick, suffering, needy and imprisoned affects where the person will spend eternity. Persons attentive to the Gospel will translate the message into action.

Believers heeding the Gospel prove their attentiveness in their daily lives. Serious believers are good neighbors, compassionate co-workers, understanding employers and good friends.

Believers heeding the Gospel see Lazarus at work, in the neighborhood or in the parish church. They take action to alleviate the suffering. Parishes heeding the present Gospel support parish ministries to poor neighborhoods.

Individuals failing to heed the Gospel put themselves at risk to suffering as did the rich man in the Gospel. Believers showing love and compassion and seeing Christ in their neighbor will experience the Kingdom. (Mt.25:31-46)

The Lord Jesus Christ loves each person. Poor Lazarus experienced God's love in the current Gospel. Lazarus was welcomed into the bosom of Abraham when he departed this life.

The greedy and narrow-minded rich man had the benefit of Moses and the Prophets. He did not pay attention. The rich man suffered due to neglecting poor Lazarus.

Today is the day for each person hearing the Gospel to assess if he or she is being compassionate to the suffering people known in their daily lives. Today is the day to increase sensitivity to the suffering people in our midst.

People with open eyes will see huge homes and housing complexes being built not far from communities riddled with poverty. There is something wrong with the imbalance that exists in the world.

Jesus Christ teaches love and compassion for the needy. The present Gospel proclaimed by the Church serves to motivate the attentive to act. The present Gospel will save the greedy person choosing to be attentive and to repent.

Heeding the Gospel and being compassion brings joy to the believer. Honoring Christ's teachings and seeing Christ in each person including those suffering nearby increases personal joy.

The life in Christ is intended to be abundant. The abundance is measured in love and peace when the believer treats each person as being in the image and likeness of Christ. Each person is to be viewed as being identified as Christ.

Helping the suffering person nearby is the way for a believer to be called by Christ to enter the Kingdom. The good thief on the cross had enough sense to recognize Christ as his neighbor. Let us see Christ in all of our neighbors.