

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

September 29, 2019



Poor Man Lazarus

Everyone seems to love a good movie or play or book with an intriguing plot, talented cast of actors and a sequence of events that keep the story moving smoothly at a good pace. This week's Gospel message about a rich man and a poor man will be a hit for sure. The intriguing plot details the life of a rich man who has everything he wants on earth such as money, power, houses, land, fancy clothes, rich foods, expensive drinks and plenty of people who want what he has.

This rich man even has enough money to be blinded to the truth that the poor do exist! In a plot twist for the ages, a poor man named Lazarus comes into the rich man's life. This poor man does not have money, power, houses, land, fancy clothes, rich foods, expensive drinks or anybody who wants to live like him, all he has is a name and the attention of the local street dogs who used to lick his sores and a voice to call out for scraps from the rich man's table. Sadly the rich man ignores the poor man for he has nothing to offer him in the way of riches or honors. However, the two of them meet the same end—death. The poor man Lazarus is carried triumphantly by a host of angels seen as a glowing white mass of wings to the subtly warm and radiant bosom of Abraham. The sense of peace and satisfaction are palpable to the one who soaks in this celestial scene. Meanwhile the rich man who has been selfish his whole life and consistent in ignoring the poor and needy finds himself in the netherworld which is a deep, dark place of torment and suffering with intense burning flames licking wildly at his body from all sides. The rich man from his place of torment and pain can see through the flames and smoke the reality that poor man Lazarus is seated next to Abraham in a most beautiful place. All of the intensity of this plot builds to hear the voice of the rich man begging for Lazarus to alleviate his suffering with some water as he struggles in the flames that separate the wicked from the just. In a dynamic ending the one who had so much, trusted in his worldly gain and ignored the cries of the poor spent eternity in the flames of selfishness begging for help, while the one who had nothing and cried out to God and others to help him spent his days enveloped in the love found in the presence of God for all eternity. What should we take away from this profound scripture on poor man Lazarus? If we are caught up in worldliness and blind to those in need we will also be blind and to occupied to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

Tracy Velishek Retirement Celebration

With sincere gratitude and thanks to God for Tracy Velishek and her dedicated service of 28 years to the families at St. Patrick of Shieldsville, MN, we will have a parish appreciation for her this weekend after the 5 pm Saturday Mass and after the 9 am Sunday Mass at St. Patrick. Through my 11+ years of priesthood I have come to see that in each parish and institution in our Catholic areas that good people step up to be on the pastoral team. Generous people like Tracy Velishek have dedicated their lives to serving the needs of our community and helping the priests of our area to carry out the mission to let Jesus Christ be known, loved and served. Please join me in thanking her during this weekend's festivities. God bless you Tracy for your generous service!

Server Training

During the next few weeks I am going to take time to train new students from St. Patrick, St. Canice and Most Holy Redeemer to serve at the Holy Mass. As a priest I prefer to have three or four servers at weekend Masses, I desire to get more students involved with helping the priest at Mass and I enjoy teaching our youth about what goes on during this most special prayer of the Catholic Faith. Students who are in the fourth grade on up will be requested to participate in the training along with their teachers or catechists even if they are not planning on serving the Mass in the near future. This gives all students an opportunity to know more about the Mass and what makes this prayer so special.

United in the love of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Tom Niehaus