



National Catholic Charities Sunday

Homily Ideas

September 25-26, 2010

Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Catholic Charities USA

Honor Catholic Charities for its long standing efforts to provide help and create hope for millions of people in need each year.

Deepen your commitment to serve those most in need and build a more just and compassionate society.





Catholic Charities USA Centennial Prayer

God of Justice, ancient and new,
From the beauty of sacred creation,
Through the covenant to the cross,
The movement of your Spirit in history
 Brought order out of chaos,
 Voiced liberation for your people through the prophets,
 And gave life through the suffering and death
 Of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through the birth of your Church,
The movement of your Spirit in time
 Brought forth a Body of faithful people,
 Shaped by the story of your great love,
And commissioned for the service of justice and peace.
We ask you to send this same Spirit upon us
 As we celebrate the Centennial of Catholic Charities USA.
Form and fashion us to be the movement of your Spirit,
 Bringing your love to a weary and worn world.
 Renew us in heart, home and heritage.
 Deepen our commitment to serve those most in need
 With the gifts and passion of staff, volunteers and benefactors.
Bless and bring all of us to the fullness of your love
 That celebrates the life and dignity of all your people.
We ask this through our Savior Jesus Christ,
Who lives and reigns with you
In the movement of your Spirit,
One God forever, and ever, Amen.



Sunday Readings

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle C Readings

- First Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4-7
- Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 146:7, 8-9, 9-10
- Second Reading: First Timothy 6:11-16
- Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Summary

On this Sunday, the readings remind us that concern for the poor is at the heart of our Church teachings. Today's readings are a particularly vibrant reminder of the danger to blindness: blindness to the plight of those less fortunate, especially the blindness that can be caused by the accumulation of excess.

- Amos warns against blindness to the plight of the poor.
- The Letter of Timothy seeks to hold up for us the shape of the Christian life, one that is marked by desire for the kingdom, not excessive wealth.
- In the Gospel parable we learn that being a disciple of Jesus is not about random acts of kindness but instead it is about the ability to be in solidarity with those who are on the other side of "gate", the poor, as symbolized in the Gospel (ref: M. Birmingham, Word and Worship, Cycle C).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, states that "Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren" (#1033).

We are challenged to cultivate in ourselves a healthy suspicion of the inequities that can lurk unnoticed beneath the surface of society, and urged to take on for ourselves God's unfailing lens of care for those who cry out in need. This Sunday confirms the gospel call to serve the poor in our midst.



Homily Ideas

- **The Gift of Presence to the Poor**
 - What do we give to the person who has everything? The very act of giving gifts is as familiar as a friend's birthday party, and as foundational as our faith.
 - We have perhaps seen the ads in print or on TV offering solutions to the problem of gift-giving to the person who has everything. It is usually something exceedingly, even obscenely expensive, or mocking luxury with a trivial trinket.
 - In a different light, we may have received an invitation to the celebration of a special occasion that states "no gifts please, your presence is present enough."
 - The strength and power of relationships prevails as the valued sign of expression for both the giver and receiver of gifts.
 - This is especially evident for all of us as people of faith when the Giver of all gifts calls us to be present to the poor and marginalized.
- **The Complacent Rich Man**
 - The rich man in today's Gospel clearly is one who has everything.
 - "Purple garments, fine linen and sumptuous dining each day" means this is someone who would be tough to shop for. He had everything. Even his scraps would have helped another, but he did not bother.
 - Abraham in effect says to the rich man that he had everything he needed during his life and his five brothers have everything they need in their lives to avoid torment and to rest in the eternal comfort of the bosom of Abraham like Lazarus.
 - The text tells us Lazarus "would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps..." if the scraps had been given to him, but they were not.
 - The rich man missed the mark by an eternal, tormenting margin. Tormenting for Lazarus at the time. Tormenting for the rich man for all eternity.



- **The Danger of Complacency**
 - The complacency of the rich man is the same as what Amos warns about in the first reading, namely, the failure to pay heed to the poor and marginalized. And the risks and consequences of this complacency can be eternal.
 - For the rich man who was complacent with even his scraps and for the people within earshot of Amos, times were very prosperous, and yet they did nothing for Lazarus or the poor.
 - Even in these tougher economic times, we are a prosperous nation with immense resources to bring to bear on our pressing needs.
 - What are the implications and opportunities for all of us in the Catholic community here in the United States as we gather to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Catholic Charities USA?

- **God Gives Us All We Need**
 - It must be stated categorically that we have everything we need.
 - From creation, through the covenant to the cross, we have everything we need. We have Moses, the prophets and One who has risen from the dead, Jesus Christ.
 - As individuals, as communities of faith, as a nation, we have everything we need to break out of our complacency and to end the torment of poverty for our sisters and brothers in America and together enjoy the eternal rest promised in God's reign.

- **We can Overcome Complacency and be Present to the Poor**
 - We continue the tradition that includes the warning of Amos, the vision of Luke and conviction and faith of Catholics, parishes, agency staff, volunteers, benefactors and clients, all coming together to make real the call, the opportunity, and the invitation to end complacency for the poor and put into practice the example of Jesus Christ.
 - The fullness of God's reign comes from the inclusion of the Lazarus' of the world, especially those right outside our doors in each of our local communities.
 - As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Catholic Charities USA, Lazarus needs our attention. We have everything we need so let us bring our very presence as a fitting anniversary gift to the Church at work to end poverty in America.