26th Sunday Ordinary Time, year C, Sept 28, 2025.

Gospel of Luke 16:19-31:

The story of the rich man and Lazarus demonstrates the importance of caring for the poor, the needy, the sick, the vulnerable, and social outcasts. CARE FOR THE POOR is a significant theme in the gospel of Luke. In Luke's gospel, Jesus went beyond simply trying to alleviate material poverty. He also addressed the spiritual and emotional needs of the poor, restoring their relationships with God, themselves, others, and creation. When Jesus declared his mission in the world, he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4: 18).

What is my personal attitude towards the poor and less privileged? Who are the 'Lazaruses' at my gate and in my life? We need to remember that sharing is the criterion of the Last Judgment: Mattthew (25:31ff) tells us that all six questions to be asked of each one of us by Jesus when He comes in glory as our judge are based on how well or poorly we have shared the blessings we have received from Him (food, drink, home, mercy and compassion), with our brothers and sisters - anyone in need - for Jesus identifies himself with each of them.

"The rich man said to Abraham, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'
"'No, Father Abraham,' the rich man said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" (Luke 16: 27-31, NIV). We have to notice the irony in Jesus' statement; on his way to Jerusalem to die, Christ was fully aware that even when he had risen from the dead, most of the religious leaders would not accept him. They were set in their ways, and neither Scripture nor God's Son himself would shake them loose.

The rich man in our passage today thought that his five brothers would surely believe a messenger who had been raised from the dead. Instead, Jesus said that if they (the five brothers) did not believe Moses and the prophets, who spoke constantly of caring for the poor, not even a resurrection would convince them. What is my personal attitude towards death, eternity, and heaven? The rich man, although in torment, had a genuine concern for his five brothers who were alive. What is my attitude towards those who are grieving the loss of someone? Grief periods are moments of deep loneliness, pain, isolation, tears, hurts, and much

more. Perhaps we have been there at some point or another. I have been on that path myself many times in the past.
Every first week in November, for All Souls' Day, St. Pius X parish celebrates the Holy Mass and lights remembrance candles for our beloved deceased ones, especially those who passed away in the last year. How do we handle issues around dying, death, resurrection and hope? Someone said, “Where we will arrive depends on what road we travel. We will get what we choose and what we live for”. The point is that we shape our moral character every day to fit into one of two places forever.

St Pius X and the Seasons of Hope for the bereaved among us. This is a program to assist anyone in need of consolation after losing a loved one. In these gatherings, there are times for reading the scripture, sharing, listening, praying, and fellowship. It is a blessing indeed to have one of us, Connie Dilts, LCPC, leading this group. The grief support group meets every Wednesday evening at 6:30 in the St. Pius X conference room.

Seasons of Hope is a unique grief support program for Catholics that focuses on the spiritual side of grieving the death of a loved one. It invites those who mourn to accompany one another and to meet Christ through scripture, prayer, reflection, and simple activities that offer comfort and help to foster healing and spiritual growth. Author M. Donna MacLeod created the Seasons of Hope program following the death of her daughter and has been used in thousands of parishes by tens of thousands of people since its original release in 2007. I would like to share one testimony about the program from a bishop.

"What most drew me to Seasons of Hope was its explicitly Catholic foundation. In contrast to secular support groups for the grieving, Seasons of Hope puts Jesus at the center and invites participants to entrust their loss and loneliness to him within the abundant consoling wisdom of our Catholic tradition. Having just lost my mother, I was a natural candidate for Seasons of Hope as a facilitator. Its well-structured format enhanced our efforts and when the sessions came to a close, I’d grown quite attached to my fellow group members. It was hard for all of us to see our time together end." (Bishop Liam Cary, Diocese of Baker–Redmond).

In our second text, St Paul encourages all of us to “pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses”. (1 Timothy 6:11-12. NIV). Amen.

May God continue to bless you and guide you, Amen.

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.