

## *Ordinary Time 26C 2016*

### *They Have Moses and the Prophets*

The man of today's gospel found himself in a situation he could never have imagined. Throughout his life he lived in luxury and wanted for nothing. Others served his every need, and he did not need the help of anyone, especially of the poor. But now, here he was in this place of torment, thirsting and calling for poor Lazarus, the very man he never helped, to help him. What a reversal of fortunes! But it was too late; and the man of today's gospel knew it. But perhaps it was not too late for his five brothers who were still alive. If only someone from the dead would go and warn them, surely they would change their lives. But Abraham responds: "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." The man knew the command of Moses to care for the poor; he knew how the prophets warned the rich. But when he was alive he did not listen to Moses or the Prophets. He had the opportunity to care for the poor. He had the opportunity to hear God's Word, and now, that time of opportunity, had passed.

There is a time for everything under heaven, the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us: a time to be born and a time to die; a time plant, and a time to reap. But if we do not seize the moment when it comes, it may never come again. For, while we live, we can hear God's Word and change our lives. While we live, we can listen to

God's Word and care for those less fortunate than us. While we live, there is the opportunity to become better than we are. But the day will come, as it came for the man of today's gospel, when we will no longer have this opportunity.

In today's second reading Saint Paul shows us how to live now so that we can live with God forever. He encourages us to pursue those things that are right and just, to live with devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness. He says: compete for the gift of eternal life with the same dedication with which athletes compete in order to win the race. Hold on to the confession of faith that was handed on to you. Confess your faith as Jesus confessed his faith when he stood before Pontius Pilate.

As he looked back on his life, the man of today's gospel could see all the missed opportunities of his life: opportunities to help and assist others, opportunities to feed the hungry and care for poor Lazarus. And he now understood *why* he missed those opportunities: *he did not listen to Moses and the Prophets*, and now it was too late. But it is not too late for us. As long as the breath of life is in us; it is never too late to listen to the Word of God and change our lives; it is never too late to listen God's Word and do what is right and good, just and merciful. May the Word of God that we hear each week penetrate to the deepest part of our heart and to change and renew us. May this word of God make

us a community of faith and love in which we our lives are transformed so that we can do what is right and good, just and merciful, while we still are live.