

(Lk16,19-31) A zsolttáros egyszer így kiált fel: „De ki látja meg saját hibáit? Tisztíts meg mindtől, ami rejtve maradt!” (Zsolt19,13) A mai példabeszéd dúsgazdagja pokolra jutott a titkolt bűne miatt. Pontosán szólva, a titkolt bűnökről tudjuk, hogy megvannak, de nem törődünk azzal, hogy felfedjük magunk előtt. Itt azonban kissé lazább értelemben használom e kifejezést. Noha a dúsgazdag bűne fel kellett volna merüljön lelkiismeretvizsgálata folyamán, ő tüstént újra eltakarta azt kifogásai által. „Vajon én tartsam-e el a felebarátomat?”—gondolta magában. Eközben az ő küszöbén éhezett Lázár, a szegény koldus, mivel nem jutott hozzá a gazdag asztaláról lehullott ételmorzsákhoz sem. Végül meghalt Lázár. Később a gazdag is elhunyt, akit későbbi magyarázók dúsgadagként emlegetnek. Akkor történt, hogy a dúsgazdag rettenetes helyzetben találta magát. A túlvilágon helyet cseréltek a szerepükben. Őt lángok gyötörték, mialatt Lázár Ábrahám áldott társaságában vigasztalódott. Most a dúsgazdag lett a koldus, azonban a kétségbeesett segítségkérései válaszolatlanul maradtak.

Szalézi Szt. Ferenc elmagyarázza, hogy az alázat álarcában rejtőző kevélység a mulasztás titkolt bűnébe sodorhat bennünket. Sokan az elmélkedést a tökéletesekre hagyják, mert ömaguk nem méltók arra; mások azt hangoztatják, hogy nem mernek gyakran áldozni, mert a szívük nem elég tiszta. Mások ismét attól tartanak, hogy nagy gyarlóságuk miatt tiszteletlenséggel illetnék a jámborságot, ha vele foglalkoznának. Az ilyenek nem akarják talentumaikat Isten dicsőségére és a felebarát lelkiüdvére értékesíteni; mert – így szólnak – gyarlóságuk tudatában attól tartanak, hogy csak a kevélység növekedik bennük, ha valami jót tesznek, és másoknak világítván – miként a gyertya – magukat emésztenek föl. Mindez csak egyszerű kifogás; nemcsak hamis, hanem gonosz alázatosság.

A Szt. Ferenc által leírt hozzáállás egyetlen mondatba sűríthető: „Túl gyenge vagyok az erények gyakorlására—legalábbis oly hősiezen, mint a szentek—tehát határozottan fel vagyok mentve.” Köztünk is lehetnek, akik hasonlóképpen gondolkoznak. E beképzelés ellenére még lehet, hogy sikerül megmenteni a lelkünket, de sokan mások elvesznek, azok a valamikor önfejű lelkek, akiket valamelyik szentnek sikerül magával bevonzolnia a mennyországba. Akár egyetlen halálos bűn is elveheti a lelkiismeretünk békéjét, mégis számtalan lélek vész oda anélkül, hogy a lelkiismerete felébredne, mivel idelent az efféle bűn megmarad egy rakás kifogás alá rejtve. El akartuk kerülni egy kereszt viselését, de végül egy másik kereszt felvételére kényszerültünk—talán egy sokkal súlyosabbára. Ennek folyamán lemondunk a határtalan örömről, melyre a szentek érdemesülnek az időben és az örökkévalóságban egyaránt. Mit mondjunk hát minderről? Talán ezt: Uram, ments meg minket az ilyen kegyetlen ráébredésre a tisztítóüzben! Ments meg minket minden eltitkolt bűnünktől! Ámen!

**English / 2016 Sunday 26C**

(Lk16:19-31) In one place, the psalmist exclaims, “Who can discern his faults? Lord, save me from my secret sins!” (Ps19:12) The rich man in today’s parable was condemned to hell for his secret sin. Strictly speaking, secret sins are those that we have, yet care not to discover. Here, however, I am using the term somewhat loosely. Although the rich man’s sin must have come to light during his examination of conscience, he promptly covered it up again with excuses. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” he thought to himself. Meanwhile, the poor beggar, Lazarus, was starving on his doorstep for want of the scraps from his lavish table. Lazarus finally died. Afterwards, the rich man, whom later commentators would call Dives, also died. Then it was that Dives experienced his rude awakening. The tables were turned for him in the netherworld. He found himself tormented in flames while Lazarus was comforted in Abraham’s blessed company. Now Dives was the beggar whose desperate pleas for help went unanswered.

St. Francis de Sales explains how pride – disguised as humility – can lead us into secret sins of omission. In the process, we actually pull the wool over our own eyes. “We meet people,” he writes, “who tell us that they leave mental prayer to those who are more perfect, not feeling themselves worthy of it; that they dare not communicate frequently, because they do not feel fit to do so; that they fear to bring discredit on religion, if they profess it, through their weakness and frailty; while others decline to use their talents in the service of God and their neighbor, because, knowing only too well their own weakness, they are afraid of becoming proud if they do any good thing, – lest while helping others they might destroy themselves. But all this is unreal, and not merely a spurious but a vicious humility.” (Devout Life, 3.5)

The mentality just described by St. Francis might be summed up in one sentence: “I’m too weak to practice virtue – at least, not heroically like the saints did – so I’m definitely dispensed from doing so.” Some of us here may be thinking similar thoughts. Despite this presumption, we might still manage to save our own soul, but many others will be lost – those onetime wayward souls whom any given saint manages to drag along with himself to heaven. Even one mortal sin can cost us much peace of mind, yet umpteen souls are lost and our conscience won’t be any worse for the wear because here below this sin of which we speak will remain buried under a heap of excuses. We wanted to avoid the cross, but in the end we only managed to exchange one cross for another – perhaps even a heavier one. In the process, we forfeited the immense joys to which the saints are privy both in time and eternity. What shall we say about all this? – How about a prayer? Lord, spare us so rude an awakening in purgatory! Save us from our secret sin! Amen!

**English / 2016 Sunday 26C / Please note! This is the longer full-length version of the abridged homily above. Sorry, there is no Hungarian translation for this longer version.**

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Here, Abraham is no longer speaking about Lazarus. His response is in fact an oblique reference to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The two primary reasons for believing in Him are mentioned: the resurrection and prophecy. First, there are the countless miracles our Lord performed, which culminated in His own bodily resurrection from the dead. No other explanation for the empty tomb is corroborated by the historical facts except the resurrection. What's more, Jesus' disciples were all afraid to die for Him while He was still alive. Where, then, did they get the courage to die for His gospel after He was crucified, unless they had truly seen Him risen from the dead? Second, and even more convincing than the resurrection, is the amazing testimony of prophecy, which Jesus fulfilled beyond anyone's wildest expectations. Here the self-consistency of the Old and New Testaments even amazes those who have studied physics – a natural science remarkable in its own right for self-consistency. The bottom line of today's parable is this: Jesus is the one who brings to light our sins, be they overt or ever so covert, lest we too undergo the rude awakening which Dives experienced in today's gospel.

Fallen human nature being what it is, we sometimes excuse the evil deeds that we commit. Far more frequently do we excuse, and sometimes even overlook, the so-called sins of omission. These are decisive good deeds that we omit, even as Dives did in today's gospel. But the most secret sin of them all was the one that we merely inherit: the now famous original sin. Using their reason alone, pagan philosophers were able to unravel many great truths found in the Old Testament. In a polytheistic world, Aristotle, nevertheless, held that there was only one God. Although pagan gods were humanoids, replete with vices, Aristotle also verified God's utter transcendence and absolute perfection. Yet, there is one Old Testament truth that totally escaped the notice of the greatest philosophers, namely: original sin. They couldn't explain the existence of evil in the world. Nor could they explain the fact that children are bad by default and have to be trained to be good – some more than others.

Although the commission of the original sin was revealed in the biblical account of Adam and Eve, the Jews themselves failed to understand the deeper significance of this event. It was only in light of Jesus' salvific death on the cross that St. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, elaborated the doctrine of original sin. (See Rom5:12f) In this way, he gave us yet another uncanny example of the self-consistency that exists between the Old and New Testaments. So we can say that Jesus not only taught us about God – most notably, that He is a Trinity – our Lord also taught us about ourselves by revealing to mankind its own secret sin.

Those who are unaware of their secret sins are, for this reason, presumptuous. The greatest cause of presumption is ignorance of the gospel. For those of us who are better acquainted with our Lord's gospel message, the next greatest cause of secret sins is the spiritual blindness produced by vices like pride and ingratitude. There are three degrees of gratitude. The first degree is simply recalling, in thought, the good thing that we have received. The second degree of gratitude is giving thanks for it in word, and the third degree of gratitude is trying to make some return for it in deed. Let's indulge in a little speculation about a purely fictional character! We can safely presume that Dives wasn't grateful to God for his wealth. Maybe he thought wealth was his birthright or maybe he thought it was simply the fruit of his own labors. In either scenario, God had nothing to do with his fortune, so why thank Him for it? Why try to make some slight return to God by coming to the aid of his fellowman? His secret sin may have been hard-heartedness, but his top secret sin was ingratitude. Whoever has ears, let him hear!

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perfect, not feeling themselves worthy of it; that they dare not communicate frequently, because they do not feel fit to do so; that they fear to bring discredit on religion, if they profess it, through their weakness and frailty; while others decline to use their talents in the service of God and their neighbor, because, knowing only too well their own weakness, they are afraid of becoming proud if they do any good thing, – lest while helping others they might destroy themselves. But all this is unreal, and not merely a spurious but a vicious humility.” (Devout Life, 3.5)

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