

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 09-28-2025

In the gospel today we heard about Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man. After two very different lives Lazarus and the rich man both died.

However, when Lazarus died, he was carried off by angels to the bosom of Abraham where he found comfort. The rich man, on the other hand, was buried and sent to the netherworld where he was in torment.

Even his name is lost to history. Had the rich man followed the Lord like Abraham and Lazarus, we would be celebrating him by name today as well. He was supposed to be a saint. Instead, look at what happened to him.

However, Jesus didn't tell this story just to scare everyone into submission. He told it to remind all of us, not just the Pharisees, but all of us what it takes to truly follow him – what it means to be a saint.

Jesus is calling us to love him and then to love him in our neighbor.

This is what the saints did – what the rich man failed to do. This is what the saints among us are currently doing and what we are called to do as well.

Having money is not a sign of God's favor but on the other hand, being poor is not a sign of his favor either.

Both kings and paupers have been raised to the altar of sanctity by Holy Mother Church and their money or lack thereof had nothing to do with it. No matter what condition we find ourselves in, regardless of our state in life, we are all called to be saints.

That doesn't mean we will never sin – even the most virtuous person sins. According to Scripture the just man sins seven times a day.

Sin is a reality that we all face, but we must be quick to ask forgiveness from the Lord when we do.

Ultimately this is the way of perfection – acknowledging our sins and seeking the Lord's mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It is God's will that we all become saints, and we are given all the graces necessary to make it a reality.

On Tuesday we celebrated the feast day of one of the greatest saints in the modern era, Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. He was born on May 25, 1897, and died on September 23, 1968.

He was a Franciscan Friar, a mystic, a renowned miracle worker who could read souls. He was so conformed to Jesus that he miraculously bore the wounds of Christ on his hands and feet for 50 years of his priesthood. Imagine that! He bore the visible wounds of Christ and very few people even know about it.

Padre Pio was canonized a saint by Pope Saint John Paul II on June 16, 2002, and will likely go down as one of the greatest saints in the history of the Church.

He is not some obscure saint from the past. There are people living today, all around the globe, who knew him well and can testify to his sanctity and to all the miracles that he performed.

I mention him because he had plenty to say about living a holy life, but I'll just highlight one story – let's call it the tale of two grandfathers.

A young lawyer came to Padre Pio for confession one day and afterward he asked him about his grandfather who had recently died.

Padre Pio, without ever having met the young man or without any direct knowledge of his grandfather, said to him, I know he was a

doctor, and he is reigning in heaven right now because he exercised great charity in his chosen profession. This was one of Padre Pio's gifts.

Then the young man suddenly remembered his other grandfather who had died 15 years earlier. As it turned out he was nothing like the first.

This man was very indifferent to religion. His attitude was, why go to Mass when you can go on walks, admire nature and pray whenever and wherever you feel like it. And why go to confession, I don't steal or kill anyone. This is good enough.

Again, Padre Pio didn't have any direct knowledge of this guy either. When he was asked about his fate Padre Pio became pale and visibly shaken and said of him, "I can't even look at it...he is so horribly disfigured and writhes in eternal flames."

The rich man in the gospel today, wasn't necessarily a bad guy but he was just complacent and indifferent to the needs of Lazarus and most likely, therefore, indifferent to God and religion.

We can't afford to live without repentance because we may become complacent and then indifference will most likely set in.

We are all called to be saints and God gives us all the graces necessary for this. The choice is ultimately ours and the consequences of not striving for it are too high.

There probably aren't major thieves and I'm assuming there aren't any murders either but we are all sinners so let's humbly bring those sins to the Lord in the confessional and continue to strive every day to be the saints that God is calling us to be.

Then our names, with all the saints, will be written in the Book of Life and we will be celebrated forever.