

We Must Lend a Helping Hand

In 1979 Pope Saint John Paul II visited New York City and gave a powerful homily on the rich man and Lazarus the poor man [Lk 16:19-31.] John Paul asked, *"Why do we think the rich man was condemned? Was it because he had riches, because he abounded in earthly possessions, because he dressed in purple and linen, and feasted sumptuously every day?"* The Holy Father answered: *"No,"* he said, *"It was not for wealth that the rich man was condemned. The rich man was condemned because he did not pay attention to the other man, because he failed to take notice of Lazarus, the person who sat at his door and who longed to eat the scraps from his table. Nowhere does Christ condemn the mere possession of earthly goods. Instead, He pronounces very harsh words against those who use their possessions in a selfish way, without paying attention to the needs of others."*

The rich man did not pay attention to the other man. These words were meant for us, even though we probably do not consider ourselves rich. Still, in comparison to most of the people on the planet we are fabulously wealthy, well housed and well clothed. Very few people here worry about not getting enough calories to survive. On the contrary, most of us worry about getting too many. I know that many of our families are struggling in today economy, but we must also recognize that we have opportunities in the United States which others envy. Pope John Paul spoke directly to us who have so much. *"We cannot stand idly by,"* he said, *"enjoying our own riches and freedom....if he stands in anywhere, Lazarus stands at our door."*

Now, this does not mean that we have to take all the world's problems on our shoulders. We have enough problems of our own without trying to solve someone else's. But we must lend a helping hand. That is the kind of thing the Holy Father was talking about: not isolating ourselves, but really paying attention to the other person. It is more than just contributing to a collection. It means sharing our gifts and above all sharing our love. When we give something, our prayer is: *"Lord, may my gift help another person. May it not only bring joy, but may it bring that person closer to you."* The rich man had everything, but he did not have God. The poor man had nothing, but he had God. Jesus makes it clear who was better off.

Along with supporting our many ministries, _____ has been so generous in helping so many people. But it has not been all about the money. We have developed deep relationships that have had a very positive impact on both our neighbors and our _____ community. It has been all about loving God and our neighbor...about praying and listening for the answers...about doing something for others.

Our assistance has never been without challenges, but we have never waived in our efforts. Even in the 2008-2009 recession and during the challenges of the Covid epidemic our efforts continued. Now in 2026 we find ourselves faced with serious challenges and we need your help. We have closely managed our resources, but our reserves have dwindled to the point where we may have to cut back on support,

We need your help to raise _____ this year: so please, donate and pray and get involved helping others.