

Letter to a Prisoner

The Rich Man and Lazarus

We must do what *can* do.

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Priest Seraphim Holland, PO 37, McKinney TX 75070; TO: ...; Oct 21/Nov 3 2019, Monk Ilarion the Great



Dear in Christ ...! Don't get too used to this! I'm replying to a letter that I received today, 11/3/2019, Sunday. Sometimes you get the bear and sometimes the bear gets you. Today I'm getting the bear. I'm very happy that you had a visit from a priest. I will try to write him or give him a call and thank him. I am very pleased at some was baptized. I will add ... to my prayers. Tell him that if he wants to write me, he can. You don't have to be sorry about not writing. I'm the one who does not write. I'm kind of in a period of exhaustion.

I also want very much to see you and ... and whoever else is there. I'm not sure when it'll happen to be honest with you. Since I'm going to prison regularly only the first two weeks of the month now for a little while, I might be able to squeeze it in. I will try to call in may contact with the chaplain and at least get my information to him. I can't make any promises right now but I will try. Some of the other places on lockdown also right now. I probably will not go to the ... unit next week, because it is locked down. That means I go to only go to two places next

week.

I think you have a very good prayer there: to **pray that all of your enemies who mistreat you experience life through the eyes of another**. May it be that they are just able to experience the life of another through empathy, and not through great suffering. We don't want them to suffer in this life, nor do we want them to suffer in the next.

It just so happens that we had the parable of the **Rich man and Lazarus** today. I preached on it. One of my main points was that if we are self-indulgent, we cannot care about the needs of other people. Our self-indulgence will stupefy us and make us indifferent to other people. The parable says the rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen and that he fared sumptuously every day. He probably didn't hate Lazarus. He was just indifferent to him, but indifference to someone suffering is practically the same as hate.

Another point that I made was that Lazarus means "**God has saved**". It is from the name Eleazar. Notice the tense! God **has** saved. God has taken care of your needs, and mine. For God one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. So, if we somehow are able to believe this because we live in the reality that God has saved, then we bear under our sufferings without bitterness or recrimination or anger. Of course, when Lazarus

died, he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. And he had a name, whereas the rich man had no name. God will never be denied. Appearances may be to the contrary in this life, but God will save those who struggle to become like Him.

Something else I mentioned in the sermon was that we **must do what we can do**. God will not hold us responsible for doing that which we are incapable of doing. He will hold us responsible for **not** doing what we can do. The rich man was very capable of sharing some of his table with the beggar, and even giving him a bed and a blanket and paying a doctor to take care of his sores. He would not have noticed any decrease in his wealth. But he did not take care of Lazarus because of his luxurious lifestyle which made him indifferent to the sufferings of the beggar that he stepped over when he went to his house. We must do what we can do. If we can pray, we must pray. If we can fast, we must fast. If we can keep our mouth shut when we want to say something to someone which would not be kind, we must do it. Perhaps some people cannot fast well. They must fast as well as they are capable of fasting. Perhaps some people cannot keep their mouth shut when they are provoked. They must find something that they can do. They must control themselves at least a little bit, and certainly pray for the person that they criticize. This is such an important principle. You are in prison and there are many things that you cannot do, but you can pray, and you can forgive. This makes you equal to the saints if you do it every time that you are presented with the option.

I pray for you every day. You know that I love you. You know that I will never stop praying for you. I have a question for you. Would you prefer that I got mail to you quickly by going to j-pay, or send letters and include pictures? This letter today will be sent by j-pay, so you should have it by perhaps even Monday evening or Tuesday.

Okay, that's it. God bless you.