

Thought for the Week
29th September 2019
26th Sunday in Ordinary time

“A Great Gulf Fixed”

When I was at school, there was an annual essay prize that everyone was expected to enter. One year, the title we were given was “A great gulf fixed”. I did not discover for many years where the title had come from; we find it in this Sunday’s Gospel. Here Abraham tells the rich man that there is an uncrossable gulf between Hades and Paradise. Once God’s judgement is made repentance is of no avail and it is too late.

I think that sometimes there is a case for presenting the readings in a different order. Having heard Luke’s retelling of the rich man and Lazarus, listening to the first reading from Amos hits us harder. Are we “ensconced so snugly” or do we “feel so safe” with our comfortable lives? We may or may not be dining on “stall fattened veal” or “drinking wine by the bowlful” but even when our, often comfortable, lives feel hard they cannot be compared to many millions of people across the world.

Amos tells the comfortable that “they will be the first to be exiled”. Jesus’ message to the anonymous rich man is that he should have done good before it was too late.

It is St Paul, in his advice to Timothy to carry on in living the faith he has already professed, who offers hope. “Fight the good fight... and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were called...” It may be easier to say than to do but we are called each day to live out the calling of our faith in word and action. When we come to be judged on living lives of love may we all be found on the Paradise side of that great gulf.

A Parishioner