



Abraham said, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead."

LUKE 16:31

FOLOWHERLOW / SHUTTERSTOCK

Woe to the Complacent

In traditional societies, a woe is a frightening declaration. It was more than a warning. It was considered performative. This means that as soon as the words were spoken, what it described began to happen. The first verse in today's first reading states the woe; the last verse describes what will happen. And it did happen. Those with wealth and prestige were the first to be exiled from the land. It should be noted that the problem was not that they were wealthy. The Bible does not condemn wealth. The issue is how it was acquired and how it is used. The wealthy are condemned because their wealth made them complacent, indifferent to the struggles of the poor.

A similar situation is found in the Gospel passage. It tells of two men, one quite prosperous and the other suffering overwhelming indignity. Their fates after death are reversed. One might think that they got their

just deserts. But that is not the point of the story. The rich man wants the poor man to comfort him, but it is too late. Then at least send him to warn the rich man's family. And here is the point of the story: That should be unnecessary. They have the religious tradition, Moses, and the prophets who have always taught that we must do what we can for our needy brothers and sisters. If they (or we) do not listen to our religious teachings, we probably will not listen to someone from the dead. Woe to the complacent!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- * *How might you participate in the food and clothing drives in your parish?*
- * *For which candidates do you vote? Those who work to make your life better or for those who work to make everyone's life better?*

