**FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION SEPTEMBER 28, 2025**

**26TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME**

**From Peace with Creation. A Catholic Liturgical Guide by James Hug S.J.**

**SCRIPTURES**

Amos 6:1a, 4 - 7

Psalm 146: 7 - 10

1 Timothy 1: 12 - 17

Luke 16: 19 - 31

**INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS**

As this year’s Season of Creation draws to its end, the warnings from the scriptures grow stronger and more dire. They reflect and support again the sense of urgency about climate change that Popes Leo XIV and Francis, climate scientists, the young, and so many around the world have been declaring. Amos focuses attention on those who remain indifferent

to the suffering of their sisters and brothers and promises them punishment. The psalmist again insists that God loves and will lift up the poor. Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, warning that the time can come when it will be too late for our conversion.

We need instead to listen to Moses, the prophets of our time, and Jesus himself, the one who has indeed risen from the dead. Paul urges Timothy and us to remain faithful, living and preaching our faith through all that lies ahead.

**POINTS FOR REFLECTION IN TODAY’S SCRIPTURE**

Today’s readings carry a harsh warning to the complacent, those who go on living well, “not made ill by the collapse” of their sisters and brothers [Amos], ignoring or failing to see the suffering poor outside their doors [Luke].

***The gospel parable*** illustrates Jesus’s belief in God’s special love for the poor and illustrates how God can extend that love through other-than human parts of Creation. Note that the dogs were far more compassionate toward Lazarus than the rich man, trying to heal his sores.

In the parable, the rich man ignored Lazarus when he was alive and continues to do so after his death, relating to Abraham as his assumed peer, asking Abraham to send Lazarus as a servant to attend to his needs.

From Christ’s perspective, Lazarus is Abraham’s peer and companion; we never even learn the rich man’s name. Popes Francis and Leo direct our attention to the poor, to migrants and refugees, to indigenous peoples. Too often they are looked down upon as backward or undeveloped, turned away as a threat to our comfort, wealth, and lifestyles. Many simply ignore them, as the people Amos challenges do, the people represented by the rich person in Jesus’s parable.

For years, Pope Francis urged us to dialogue respectfully and openly with indigenous peoples because of their long traditions of listening to the teaching of the Creation around them, because of the wisdom they received about how to live in harmony with the natural world. Those living in poverty too have important wisdom from their experience that we all need.

* Are there people we ignore or don’t see, whose suffering we do not feel compassion

for, whom we do not recognize as sisters and brothers? Who are they?

* How might we respond more compassionately to the millions of our sisters and brothers around the world suffering from climate change, ecological destruction, forced migration, and poverty?
* How can we nourish a more inclusive global perspective in ourselves? In our

communities?

The main part of the story Jesus tells in today’s gospel plays out once it is too late to do anything to change the situation. This stirs in the rich man a sense of urgency for his family at home whom he loves.

In the context of the Season of Creation and the complex ecological and social crisis humanity is facing, there is still too little urgency for action. The latest warning from the scientific community indicates there are only a few years left for humanity to end the warming of the planet before it is pushed past tipping points that will escalate climate change and ecological destruction and make them impossible to stop or reverse. It

is urgent that this be responded to with more meaningful global action immediately. Otherwise, it could take millennia for Earth to repair the damage done, as it has before in the planetary history of traumatic changes and great mass extinctions.

One important region of Earth, the Amazon provides a sobering lesson. The Amazon

rainforest has been developing for 55 million years. It provides more than 20% of the oxygen

on which Earth’s life depends. It removes and sequesters countless tons of greenhouse gases that warm the planet, is home to one of the richest communities of biodiversity anywhere and shapes the global climate.

However, at the current rate of human destruction of the Amazon rainforest for palm oil plantations, cattle ranches, and other corporate efforts to exploit consumer desires, it could be destroyed by the end of this century.

The evolutionary work of those 55 million years in all its richness and service to life on Earth is irreplaceable. It is urgent that this destruction be stopped. Immediately.

In another alarming example, the ice sheets on the planet are melting more and more rapidly each year now from the rising global average temperature. Scientists point out that there is enough water in just the ice sheet now covering Greenland to raise sea levels around Earth by as much as 23 feet if it all melts. The Danish Meteorological Institute reported that in July 2019 the melting from the Greenland ice sheet alone added 197 billion tons of water to the Atlantic Ocean.

Three years later, in July of 2022, a CNN report noted: “The amount of ice that melted in Greenland between July 15 and 17 alone — 6 billion tons of water per day — would be enough to fill 7.2 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, according to data from the US National Snow and Ice Data Center. Put another way, it was enough to cover the entire state of West Virginia, USA, with a foot of water.” [CNN report, 7/23/2022]

And a May 20, 2025 article in *The Washington Post* indicated that the current levels of warmingon Earth of 1.2 degrees above preindustriallevels seem to be enough to continue therapid melting of the polar ice sheets that willdisplace coastal communities around Earth. Thecurrent emerging scientific judgment in a newreport seems to be that even an average globaltemperature rise of 1 degree above preindustriallevels will inundate cities, towns and even wholestates on the world’s coasts and radically change

human life on Earth as we know it.

**What will it take to stir the strong global response that is so urgently needed?**

Abraham told the rich man that his family had all the warning they needed in Moses and the prophets. Humanity today has all the warning it needs in the cries of the poor and of Earth, in the warnings of scientists and the suffering and movement of tens of millions of climate refugees.

* How can we be part of the prophetic outcry?
* How can we help create the sense of urgency

that is needed over the next five to ten years?

* Are there specific things that our communities can do to raise awareness of the

urgency of the situation and respond to it?

***In his letter to Timothy*** about how to live in a difficult, even hostile world, St. Paul urges him to “pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.” [1 Tim. 6:11] In the context of the Season of Creation and the socio-ecological crisis facing life as we know it, Paul would join Pope Francis in translating the message of faithful discipleship into a call for integral ecological conversion.

That message would say, “You, People of God in today’s world, pursue:

• A vision and global solidarity that takes in with love and compassion the needs and

dynamics of the whole web of life,

• A more adequate understanding of the links and destructive dynamics within the complex networks of life that need to be addressed if the human community is to reverse climate change and overproduction and care wisely and sustainably for Creation,

• A rejection of consumerism and the compulsive accumulation of goods and wealth,

• An embrace of simple lifestyles that prioritize and support human dignity and just

relationships for all,

• A transformation of the destructive global economy that prioritizes and requires ever greater material growth and accumulation by the very way it is structured, and

• Ways to overcome the widespread inequality in the human community.”

* + How can we take up this prophetic call?
  + What next steps might we take?
  + What elements of an integral ecological conversion do I/we feel drawn to and

able to embrace and live right now?

* + What elements can our community embrace and live right now?
  + What steps might we take to prepare ourselves to embrace this discipleship more fully?

**FAITH REFLECTIONS**

* Are you among those who believe in God, the source of all that is, who loves Creation, and who is calling us to respond urgently to the cry of Earth?
* Are you among those who believe in Jesus, who teaches us what true wealth is, who invites us into his Ways of compassion and justice, and who challenges us to serve God, not wealth or power over others?
* Are you among those who believe in Jesus, who gave himself in love to all those in need and, through his courageous faith, showed the power of love over oppression, rejection, judgment, suffering, and even death itself?
* Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit who groans in empathy within a suffering Creation and is working with us and through us, raising up prophetic voices and movements, calling us to save and care for Creation as we know it and to nurture its rebirth?

**This is our faith.** Through it we see God’s revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise that our deepest spiritual longings will come to

fulfillment through the Holy Spirit in the ages to come. **Amen.**