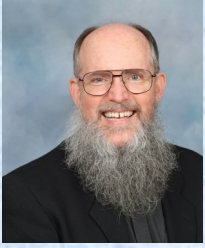


## Homily Rerun: September 25, 2016 ~ Fr. Bill

### The Judgment of Responsibility



I do not like today's parable. First, it challenges my comfortable life; and second, it elicits the 'no fair' that has dwelt in the depth of my being from early childhood. The parable gives no indication that 'Dives' (the name traditionally assigned to the rich man) had done anything wrong, nor that Lazarus had done anything right. On top of this, the permanence of Hell certainly is a scary thought.

Please also note that there is no condemnation of money or of wealth; nor is there support for either the left wing socialism of Communism, or right wing socialism of Nazism. Throughout Scripture money is seen as a blessing from God, but a blessing that can become our god if we do not accept the responsibility that comes with it. Responsibility is the ability to respond. The more we have the more we can respond to the needs of individuals and of society, and we will be held accountable for how generous a response we make.

In a speech, John F. Kennedy pointed out the consequences for society when we fail to respond according to our abilities. Mistakenly thinking he was quoting Edmond Burke (an Irish political figure in the late 1700s), he repeated a truth often stated by others before him, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." The most blatant example of this today is ABORTION. So many of us have become lax about abortion that we allow it to go on without lifting a finger against it. You will not have to answer to God for the outcome of any election, but you will have to answer to God for your vote. When you stand before the throne of judgment and God asks you, "How did you respond to the needs of the unborn in the use of your ability to vote?" what will be your answer?

Edmond Burke actually did say, "When bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle." From the earliest days, FREEDOM OF RELIGION has been one of the fundamental freedoms (some say the most fundamental on which all others rest) that define us as a nation. Freedom of religion has protected the Catholic Church from the forces of evil that have been joined in bigotry against us throughout the more than 200 years of our nation. The intolerant forces of evil have gained great power and have, in the last twenty years or so, expanded to a hatred of Christianity and its Jewish roots. Many of our elected officials refuse to speak of freedom of religion choosing instead the intentionally watered down phrase "freedom of worship." And yet many of us, perhaps most of us sitting right here in this church at this very moment, do not take it seriously and refuse to join together to defeat the assembled forces of evil even as they march against us. At the judgment, when God looks at the record of your life, will He be able to tell which side you were on? Or will you show up on the sidelines as the forces of good and of evil battle for the soul of our nation?

All sin is hatred, and all hatred is sin. There are many ways in which hatred shows its hideous face but they all stem from two primary forms: the hatred of animosity and the hatred of apathy, of which either will guide you to hell. [Yes, there is a hell and yes, you can go there.] DIVES GOES TO HELL: not for sin, not for missing Mass, not for unjust practices, not because he was rich, not because he didn't accept Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior, but FOR DOING NOTHING – for not responding according to his ability.

I have been connected to St. Charles Borromeo all my life having gone to grade school at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, and to both high school and college at Borromeo Seminary. When I was first appointed pastor it was for St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Orlando. St. Charles, a bishop, did the work of ten men in implementing the Council of Trent. And yet he said, "I fear the judgment not so much because of the evil I have done as because of the good I have failed to do." Taking these words to heart would go a long way in embracing Jesus' point in today's Gospel parable.