

Homily based on the readings from September 28, 2025 (Amos 6.1a, 4-7; 1 Timothy 6.11-16; Luke 16.19-31)

About ten days ago, I received a message from one of the teachers at Sacred Heart School – forwarding a query she had received from some of her students. Although it sounds like an unusual question, what the students were *asking* about was the origin of demonic beings – how *angels* in heaven wound up becoming *devils* in hell. My initial impulse, as is often the case, was to consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Looking at the relevant paragraphs, I was struck by two sentences in particular:

This “fall” [of the angels] consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign.

(And a bit later.)

It is the *irrevocable* character of their choice ... that makes the angels' sin unforgivable.

The word that stands out here, of course, is *irrevocable* – in other words, irreversible, unchangeable. The decision the angels made to rebel against God can never be undone. To reinforce this point, the Catechism quotes Saint John Damascene: “There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death.”

We need to be careful not to speculate excessively about the nature of heaven – which is utterly beyond our comprehension – but one thing we know for certain is that heaven exists beyond the scope of our limited conception of *time*. In the words of Saint Augustine:

There, the days do not come and go in succession, and the beginning of one day does not mean the end of another; all days are one, simultaneously and without end[.]

Any *being* that dwells in such a realm can never reevaluate or reconsider. Once a choice is made, it is eternal – it always has been and always will be *exactly* that way. Even though – in our present state – we cannot begin to imagine what such an existence would be like, we can recognize that the decisions made there are, in fact, *irrevocable*.

Although we are all affected by what happened to the fallen angels, our primary concern is – and *ought* to be – what happens to human beings. From this perspective, we should appreciate the limitations of our earthly existence for what they truly are – a gift from God. Because we are embedded in time – with a past, a present, and a future – we have the opportunity to grow and develop, to change our minds. Since the days of our earliest ancestors, human beings have been incessantly rebelling against God – but, unlike the fallen angels, we all have the opportunity to repent. By the grace of God, we are not judged based on our *worst* day, but on the conclusion of *all* our days.

What all of us need to understand – with complete and total clarity – is that our conduct in this life is what determines our fate in the next. Once we have crossed the threshold of eternity, there are no take-backs and no do-overs. Remember: “There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death.” That is precisely the lesson of today’s Gospel. The rich man in the parable had every chance to put his life in order. Every day, God gave him the opportunity to share his enormous wealth with the poor man “lying at his door”; to act with charity, generosity, and basic human decency; to become the kind of person he needed to be. Every day, the rich man squandered this opportunity – for no reason whatsoever, apart from his greed and his laziness and his indifference. Only when he was finally called to judgment did he realize the magnitude of the gifts he had wasted – but by then, of course, it was far too late.

This parable ends with an interesting bit of foreshadowing. The rich man *begs* to be allowed to warn his five brothers about their likely fate, to which Abraham bluntly responds: “If they will not listen to Moses

and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.” Abraham’s message clearly carries a double meaning – one for the rich man in the parable and one for everybody else. For those of us living in the light of Christ’s Resurrection, not only do we have access to the wisdom of Moses and the prophets, but also to the testimony of someone who has – in fact – risen from the dead.

We have all received clear instructions about what we need to do – and a lifetime in which to do it. None of us knows how much time God has granted us, but every single day – every single hour – is an unreplaceable gift, which we must *never* allow to go to waste. The purpose of this gift is neither contentment nor fulfillment – but *salvation*. In the end, each of us will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ – *the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light*. We need to keep this fact first and foremost in our minds – not in fear and trembling, but in joyful anticipation of the *unimaginable* glories that *await* God’s good and faithful servants.