



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle C Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #138

### Reading I: Amos 6:1A, 4-7

The prophet Amos continues God's warning to those who live in a false sense of security that they believe is provided by having wealth. It is not that wealth is evil in any way but rather the evil enters in when those who are wealthy are not aware of the needy and the poor around them. Amos describes this by illustrating the excessive habits and consumption of the people. Having no concern for others will be the downfall not only of Israel, but of any person, community or society.

### Reading 2: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

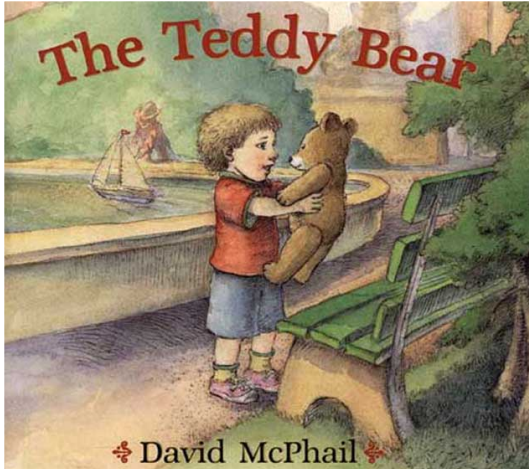
Saint Paul continues to encourage the young Timothy in the ways of living a exemplary life so that he may be an example of those he is called to serve. If a community is to be **compassionate** and loving then the leader of the community must model these virtues. The leader will set the tone for the community. There is a saying about leadership: *model the behavior you wish to see, become the change you are looking to bring about.*

### Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Jesus tells the Pharisees the story of a rich man and a poor man, Lazarus, who is covered with sores. The rich man did nothing to help Lazarus nor did he actively do anything to harm him, even though he was on the rich man's doorstep. In fact, the rich man was indifferent to Lazarus, seeing him just as part of the landscape or an inanimate object. When they both died, Lazarus was with Abraham in heaven while the rich man was in torment. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus down to him to give him some water, which was now impossible, as Lazarus could not cross the gulf between them. Abraham reminded him that in life he had good things while Lazarus had only difficulties that could have been alleviated by the rich man. The rich man pleads that Lazarus be sent to his family and warn them of the dangers of being indifferent to the plight of others. Abraham reminds him that they have the law and the prophets to direct them if only they would heed them.



children's  
story



### *The Teddy Bear*

Written by David McPhail

Illustrated by David McPhail

Publication: 2002 Henry Holt & Company

ISBN- 10: 0-8050-7882-7



character  
education  
activity

**Compassion is a way of  
entering into someone else's  
world in order to know what  
they might need.**

## *The Teddy Bear*

This is a story about a boy and his teddy bear. He loved his teddy bear immensely, but after a mistake at a restaurant, the teddy bear was left behind and ended up in a dumpster. A bearded homeless man found the bear and he made it his friend. The boy grew and gradually forgot about the bear until he saw it on a bench, where the bearded man had left it momentarily. The boy took the bear, and in seeing the old man's anguish, gave the bear back.

Think about the things that you could give away to someone else. What could you give to people who need something? Thinking of the needs of others and looking for ways to meet them brings us out of ourselves. It helps us to practice the **compassion** Amos says is lacking in Israel, the **compassion** that Jesus found lacking in the rich man, the **compassion** that Lazarus didn't find in his life. How can you practice **compassion** today? What could you do today to meet the needs of others? Maybe one day we could all be as selfless as the boy!

## *Open Mind Portrait of Boy*

Step One: Create a large head shot of the character. Imagine what you think the character looks like from the pictures and descriptions in the text as well as your imagination. Decide how much of the character you wish to show: just the head and face? from the shoulders up? from the waist up? the whole person? Draw the characters head shot including the face on a piece of paper. Illustrate your portrait with colors, construction paper or whatever will make the character colorful.

Step Two: Place cartoon bubbles of the character's thoughts around the portrait. Write what the character thinks, or says to himself, on each bubble. Put the bubbles up around the portrait. Capture what you think the boy thinks and feels that leads to his actions.

What do you say or think to yourself that leads you to act with compassion?!



case study

Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.

## What could you do today?

You have been helping out with a dinner at your church that provides for people in your local community who need food. You feel this is an important program, and you know how it helps the people who come each week. You now know some of them, and know their names. Some people who live in the neighborhood of the church are angry because they think the dinner brings the homeless into their neighborhood. Some of your friends think you should spend your time with them instead of helping strangers. You think you are doing the right thing. Or are you? What do you think? What would you say to the neighbors and to your friends?

## Look Feel Know Act

**Compassion** is feeling another person's need or suffering and actually doing something about it. The Sunday readings are a case study of what **compassion doesn't look like**.

The prophet Amos describes people living really rich lives with no regard for anyone but themselves. They sleep in the best beds and they are pampered beyond their needs. But with all they have, they don't care about people in need. Amos accuses them by bringing up an image from the Joseph story. Joseph was loved by his father, Abraham, who gave him a coat of many colors. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and threw him into a deep well, intending to leave him there to starve. They sold him into slavery to make money instead. How cold is this to do to your own brother? What is Amos saying about Israel when he brings up the Joseph story? How would you respond if a prophet charged you with caring only about yourself? We all need to care about others as well as ourselves. We all have to ask ourselves: have we become cold?

The rich man had a great life eating the best foods and living in a fine house. But the gospel suggests he didn't trouble himself with the poor man who lived just outside his door. Lazarus is clearly described as someone we would notice, given his open sores and the like. Do you think it would be easy to miss seeing someone in such misery? The really sad part is not even trying to see.



## closing tool

In *The Teddy Bear*, the boy is reunited with his bear. But in an instant, he realizes that his joy at finding the bear is the beginning of the homeless man's pain of losing the bear. This is the same pain the boy remembers from when he lost the bear himself. Unlike the rich man, the boy looks around and notices that the man is suffering and is aware that can do something about it. Even though the boy could rightfully claim the bear as his, the boy cares about the homeless man as well as himself, and realizes how little this man has. Most importantly, the boy actually does something; he gives the bear back to the man. He not only looks, and feels the man's suffering, and knows what he can do about it, he actually does it.

But there is so much suffering in the world! How can anyone ever show **compassion**? The story of the rich man and Lazarus is about not noticing another human being's agony right on our doorstep. Amos is questioning Israel about not caring for their own while living in absolute luxury.

*The Teddy Bear* draws us into **compassion** in our actual daily life. What opportunities do we have to be more **compassionate** in our daily lives? What might you notice, care about and do something about? Someone at school? In your family? In your community? **Compassion** starts with how we treat each person we come across, come in contact with each day.

**Pray that God will give you the heart to see the needs of others and to feel and act with compassion for that person each day and every day.**



**Santa Clara  
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together 4

[www.scu.edu/character](http://www.scu.edu/character)