

I got quite a shock when I read over today's Scriptures

because there I was! Me! Father fitz!

Yes! ME--I am the guy clothed in fine linen!

Look!

And yes, I do eat sumptuously every day.In recent weeks Luke in the Gospels has been leading us to this the most dramatic story of them all where he wants us to find ourselves.

In it Jesus the great story teller gives us this remarkable story of Dives

and Lazarus and HE wants us to find ourself in it. Since none of us is the sore infested Lazarus then we must be the rich man.....so what are we to do?

How am I? How are you to escape the predicament of Dives the rich man?

Well of course there is a way out. And that is not to ignore Lazarus While we live.

Are you aware that in the Catholic funeral liturgy there is a prayer said over us which reads:

"and with Lazarus, May you have eternal life!"

Well there are countless ways for you and me to reach out to Lazarus in our day and I bet you have found many of them. What is important to realize is that this reaching out is not something extra we do but it is at the core of our Gospel living.

Dorothy Day, the apostle to the poor went so far as to say: "I firmly believe that our salvation depends on the poor.

Indeed that seems to be the message of today's Gospel as well.

I'll conclude with a favorite story of mine: A salesman was on the road down in the Ozarks when a terrible thunderstorm came up. Fearful of rising waters, he took refuge at a farmstead and was offered hospitality. After supper, he and the farmer went out on the porch to observe the flooding which now surrounded the house. And then a strange sight appeared: a hat kept floating around and around the house. So the salesman asked the farmer: "How do you explain that hat going round and round?"

"Oh that! That's just Grand Pa....he said he'd get the grass cut, come he'll or high water!"

Like the relentless Grand Pa mowing the lawn no matter what, there is a group of unheralded Catholics in every parish who in every season and all kinds of weather reach out to the poor. They are your hands and mine noticing and caring for Lazarus in our time and our place.

They are the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

When you support them, you are living out today's Gospel.

And at the international level, there is Catholic Relief. Google them and discover how you can help their work which is the work of Christ.

As the Irish would say, God bless the work!

