

# THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY



Creation, © Lisa Bierer

**26TH SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME**  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

## WEEKLY MASS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY: 5:00PM

SUNDAY:

7:30AM, 9:30\*, NOON, 5:30PM

\*ASL INTERPRETED & LIVESTREAM

## WEEKDAYS

7:00AM & NOON

## LEAFLET

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**SEASON of  
CREATION**

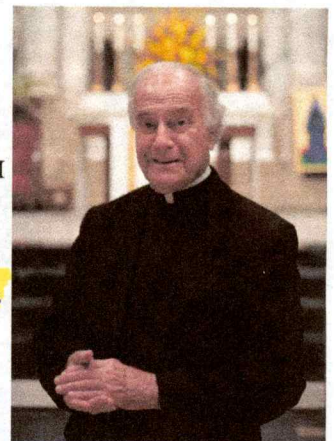
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## "MIND THE GAP!"

No, I am not talking about a particular clothing label but a recording inviting one to be alert when boarding the London subway. My first experience of "minding the gap" came from a smartly dressed attendant who, taking me by the arm said, "Be careful, Sir. Mind the gap, now." I was thankful for his assistance, especially noting a woman in front of me who had lost a shoe while not "Minding the Gap."

Our readings for the Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time call our attention to a variety of gaps, especially between the rich and the poor, the perfect and the imperfect, the smug and the vindicated. Some gaps have reached chasm-like proportions and, I suspect, will never be bridged. The sad fact is that the poor do get poorer and the rich get richer.

Having finished the book, *The Haves and Have-Yachts: Dispatches on the Ultrarich*, I metaphorically floated through the yacht cultures of plutocrats and billionaires who easily left the perceived rich in the wake of the really rich. Temporarily luxuriating in the disparity of wealth and power, temptation abounds and the elusive search for happiness can easily create a scarcity model, "one can never have too much." A recent national poll indicated that forty million Americans live in poverty and one in five American children live in families experiencing poverty. In Minnesota, the rate of poverty has increased to 9%. This economic gap is nothing new, so why harp about it?



**Fr. Joseph Gillespie, OP**  
Senior Associate  
The Basilica of Saint Mary

Commonly referred to as the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19-31), this social justice lesson from Jesus carries an eternal wallop. Ignoring the plight of a poor man named Lazarus who lay at the gate of the rich man (often referred to as Dives, Latin for "rich"), the teaching component of the parable takes place after the death of both men. Dives ends up in Hades (hell) while Lazarus is "carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom (heaven). From his tormented place in hell, Dives spots Lazarus tucked safely in the bosom of Abraham (do you feel an old gospel tune coming on?) and calls out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame."

*Continued...*



# VOLUNTEER

## RE-ENTRY MENTOR PROGRAM

Pairs of mentors are matched with a Returning Neighbor who is re-entering the community, may be struggling with mental health challenges, and have expressed a desire for a spiritual connection. For more info, contact volunteer ministry leader, David Link at [davclink@gmail.com](mailto:davclink@gmail.com) or 612.747.3186.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY MINISTRY TEAM

Join our safe hospitality team. To learn more and how to apply, please contact Joe Cybert at [jcybert@mary.org](mailto:jcybert@mary.org).

## USHERS

Model Christ's compassion and warmth to all who enter our doors. Greet guests, receive the collection, and distribute bulletins. Please email Melissa at [mstreit@mary.org](mailto:mstreit@mary.org).



## HOPE AND HEALING SPEAKER: DR. CAROLYN WOO

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1  
5:00PM RECEPTION  
6:00PM PRESENTATION

## RESILIENCE: FINDING OUR WAY BACK TO HOPE

Carolyn Woo is the former president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official humanitarian agency of the U.S. More details at [mary.org/hopehealingwoo](http://mary.org/hopehealingwoo).

The Reverend David T. Link Lecture Series  
Co-sponsored by the Initiative on Restorative Justice and Healing

It is at this point in the story that the "unbridgeable gap" is addressed. Minding the gap, Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us." Yes, you got the picture, no second chances!

In traditional Catholic theology, a reprieve (Purgatory) might be in order. However, in the early moral teaching of the church, the either/or concept of heaven dominated the moral mindset of the church. A consequential conclusion catapulted recalcitrant sinners into hell and the repentant sinners into heaven. The only catch was that one must repent before death to reap eternal comfort in the bosom of Abraham or suffer the miserable consequences of hell.

Historically speaking, compassionate pastoral "loopholes" began to develop on the basis of a realized delay in the Second Coming of Jesus. So, Limbo (now defunct) and Purgatory (still alive and well) created bridgeable gaps for the unbaptized and hard to judge cases of individuals who were bad, but "not that bad." Individual peccadilloes could escalate from venial to mortal sins, but the sacrament of penance offered assurance of God's forgiveness.

Taking a stab at reading Dante's trilogy, *The Divine Comedy*, the reader uncovers the theological bases for Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven and offers an insight into the moral theology dominating Church teaching until the Reformation. It would take the Second Vatican Council to refine the harshness of "deserved punishment" and leave the judging of souls up to God. Would Dives, under the new guidelines for sentencing, get a "drink of water" while doing time for bad behavior? The hope, of course, would be that Dives would eventually experience the bosom of Abraham, but no such luck according to the original parable of Jesus.

Rediscovering compassion is a great gift and bearing witness to forgiveness is at the heart of the gospel. The hair-raising parables that Jesus preached to his followers were calculated to get their attention and scare the hell out of them. Leading people into conversion was the mission of Jesus and getting them to give up the behavior of "The rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen who feasted sumptuously every day and ignored the poor (Lazarus), must be the goal of every Christian community.

We cannot speak of justice without charity or charity without justice. Love and forgiveness must temper our sense of justice to become a charitable person. Provoking an awareness of the invisible poor who surround us requires that we take off our moral blinders and remove the self-imposed smug assessments of those who don't do enough for the poor. Bridging the gap between the rich and the poor is not about obsessing over tax cuts; rather it is honestly recognizing the need to care for one another whether we are rich or poor. Even Dives in the final lines of the parable begins to think about his brothers who need to be awaked to the consequences of selfish behavior: "Father Abraham, I beg you to send Lazarus to my fathers' house, for I have five brothers and warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Can we mind the gap? Realistically speaking, yes and no; however, we can find ways to alert others to the moral gaps in our lifestyles, our social policies and our politics that so easily widen the gap between the imperfections of human life and the ideal. As Paul writes in his first letter to Timothy (6:11-16), "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will bring around the right time." The book of Proverbs sums it all up rather succinctly; "Those who shut their ears to the cry of the poor will themselves also call and not be heard." (21:13).

Minding the gaps and helping others not to fall into the cracks is the right thing to do, unless, of course, you would rather live some place other than in the bosom of Abraham.