

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

Genesis 17:7



Today's Old Testament and New Testament readings center on the figure of Abraham. In Genesis 17, God bestows a new name, Abram, to Abraham, forging a covenant "between me and you." This covenant carries with it the promise that Abraham will be "the ancestor of a multitude of nations." The reading from John also focuses on Abraham. In mystical language, Jesus cryptically proclaims, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." In this rich tapestry of texts, I add my personal favorite New Testament portrayal of Abraham found in the Gospel of Luke within the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19–31).

The parable of Lazarus at the Rich Man's gate paints a stark portrait of excessive wealth and abject poverty coexisting side-by-side. Lazarus, a beggar afflicted with painful sores,

languishes in hunger at the gate of a wealthy man who indulges in lavish feasts every day. Upon Lazarus's death, he finds solace in the compassionate embrace of Abraham. In contrast, when the wealthy man meets his demise, Abraham becomes the herald of God's judgment. When the rich man implores Abraham for a miraculous sign to warn his wealthy brothers, Abraham tells him the sign he is hoping for is already present: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Today's readings

Psalm 105:4–11 | Genesis 17:1–8

John 8:51–59

In our daily lives, how can we become more aware of those who "dwell at the gates" of our existence? How can we be like Abraham in responding with both compassion and justice?