



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

October 30, 2022

Becoming Attentive Travelers

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem and passes through the town of Jericho. His intention was to move right through town, yet when he catches sight of Zacchaeus, he stops. Jesus was on the move, yet not so obsessed with plans and objectives that he didn't notice the needy soul of Zacchaeus peering down upon him from the branches of a sycamore tree.

Part of being an apostle of Christ is having a heart that is always attuned to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. We

cannot be so consumed with our plans that we miss opportunities to attend to those on our path.

Zacchaeus was a public sinner, a publican, a man among the hated tax collectors and collaborators of the Romans. Rather than a person to visit he was, for the Jews, someone to be shunned. Not for Jesus! He came to seek and save the lost. And Zacchaeus wanted to be found. He was so driven to see Jesus, he made himself look ridiculous by climbing a tree, admitting to his short stature and curiosity.

How many souls along our path are showing their unquenchable thirst to discover Jesus and, even more, to be discovered by him? Some, while amassing worldly riches, realize their deep hunger can only be satisfied by something else. Only spiritual goods can satiate the Spirit. Let's be willing to go off-road and facilitate these encounters with Jesus—of course, after we ourselves have been encountered by him. +

We must never be so consumed with plans that we miss opportunities to attend to those on our path.

A Word from Pope Francis

How many people even today persist in an ill-chosen life because they have found no one willing to look at them in a different way, with the eyes, or better, with the heart of God, that is, to look at them *with hope*? Jesus instead sees a possibility for resurrection even in those who have amassed many mistaken choices.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
AUGUST 9, 2017



Sunday Readings

Wisdom 11:22—12:2

You love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for you would not fashion what you hate.

2 Thessalonians 1:11—2:2

We always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling.

Luke 19:1–10

[Jesus said to Zacchaeus,] "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I as curious, as eager, as humble as Zacchaeus?
- Would I have interrupted my plans to encounter Zacchaeus?

O, When the Saints...

By Paige Byrne Shortal

Do teachers in Catholic elementary schools still invite children to come to school on Halloween dressed as their favorite saint or Bible character? They did in my children's school. My youngest once chose Zacchaeus—an easy choice for this shortest boy in the class.

Kids like this story we hear in today's Gospel. Zacchaeus is easy to picture: a short guy so eager to see Jesus that he climbs a tree. He's the "chief tax collector," which means he's good at his job—collecting taxes from the Jews to pay the Romans. And he's wealthy, which means he's been skimming off the top. That's how tax collectors made their living—they were not paid a salary but instead kept whatever they could collect above what was owed. So he was probably not a real popular fellow, either. Imagine when it's time to pay your taxes if, instead of an impersonal form to fill out, there is an actual person knocking on your door and holding out a hand for your money. And because taxes have always been confusing, and no one knows what they really owe, you would have to give Zacchaeus whatever he told you to pay. No, he would not have been well-liked.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but what happened is that Jesus saw him.



Really *saw* him: a lonely man; a rich man who isn't too proud to climb a tree; curious and eager; a man ready for conversion. Jesus does not ignore him as others do but invites himself to dinner. Maybe that's something else children like about this story: we all long to be noticed, to be seen not only as we are, but especially as we long to be.

This simple act of Jesus prompts the well-off Zacchaeus to become generous. And that's another thing we like about the Zacchaeus story—the quick finish. He hears the message of Jesus and applies it to himself immediately.

Isn't that the difference between

most of us and the great saints? Most of us hear the gospel truth about being poor in spirit and loving one another and taking up our cross and that camel/needle thing and we respond, "OK, sounds good...you go first." Not Zacchaeus and not those who get to use the title "Saint" before their name; those whose lives we celebrate this week on All Saints' Day. If we want to live in the company of the saints, then we had best be about applying the gospel truth to our own lives... immediately. +

*The story of Zacchaeus the
repentant tax collector
is the story of the
salvific mission of Jesus.*


PRAYER

*Merciful God, help us
to be like Zacchaeus,
who was eager to know Jesus;
and like Jesus, who noticed
those whom others shunned.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 31–November 5

Monday, Weekday:

Phil 2:1–4 / Lk 14:12–14

Tuesday, All Saints' Day:

Rv 7:2–4, 9–14 / 1 Jn 3:1–3 / Mt 5:1–12a

Wednesday, All the Faithful Departed

(All Souls' Day): Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 6:3–9 /
Jn 6:37–40

Thursday, Weekday:

Phil 3:3–8a / Lk 15:1–10

Friday, St. Charles Borromeo:

Phil 3:17–4:1 / Lk 16:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:

Phil 4:10–19 / Lk 16:9–15

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