

[148] **THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME** C

FIRST READING

You have mercy on all things because you love everything that exists.

A reading from the book of Wisdom

11:22 – 12:1

Our Lord, compared with you,
the world is a speck of dust too light for the scales.
And it quickly disappears like drops of morning dew.

You show mercy to everyone,
and your power is absolute.
You overlook our sins,
so that we will turn to you.

You created everything,
and you love it all.
You would never make anything that you did not like.

Nothing would have lasted,
unless you had wanted it to.
Only what you commanded to last could have endured.

Master, you love all who live,
and you have pity on all of us,
because everything is yours.
Your eternal Spirit is in everything.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

18:1-2ab, 46

R. (see 1) I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

I will praise you,
my God and King,
and always honor your name.
I will praise you each day
and always honor your name.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

You are merciful, Lord!
you are kind and patient
and always loving.
You are good to everyone,
and you take care
of all your creation.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Our Lord, you keep your word
and do everything you say.
When someone stumbles or falls,
you give a helping hand.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

SECOND READING

May the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in you
and you in him.

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 1:11-12

Brothers and sisters:

God chose you,
and we keep praying that God will make you
worthy of being his people.

We pray for God's power to help you do
all the good things that you hope to do
and that your faith makes you want to do.

Then, because God and our Lord Jesus Christ are so kind,
you will bring honor to the name of our Lord Jesus,
and he will bring honor to you.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

John 3:16

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

The Son of Man came to seek out and save what was lost.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

19:1-10

Jesus was going through Jericho,
where a man named Zacchaeus lived.
He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich.

Jesus was heading his way,
and Zacchaeus wanted to see what he was like.
But Zacchaeus was a short man and could not see over the crowd.
So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree.

When Jesus got there, he looked up and said,
“Zacchaeus, hurry down!
I want to stay with you today.”

Zacchaeus hurried down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

Everyone who saw this started grumbling,
“This man Zacchaeus is a sinner!
And Jesus is going home to eat with him.”

Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the lord,
“I will give half of my property to the poor.
And I will now pay back four times as much
to everyone I have ever cheated.”

Jesus said to Zacchaeus,
“Today you and your family have been saved,
because you are a true son of Abraham.
The Son of Man came to look for and to save
people who are lost.”

The gospel of the Lord.



**Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C**

Prayer:
Dear God,
Please help us to treat everyone with kindness and respect.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Readings:
Wisdom 11:22 - 12:1
Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 13cd - 14
Second Letter of Paul to Thessalonians 1:11-12
Luke 19:1-10

Reflection:
This morning I told my daughter to be careful who she hangs out with at school since we are often taught that we are defined by the company we keep so if she hangs out with girls who have bad reputations, she may end-up with that same bad reputation even though she does nothing to earn it. Also, knowing how easily kids can be influenced, it is concerning for a parent when our children spend time with kids we think don't behave the way we think they should. Tonight I will be apologizing to her and thanking her for following Jesus' lead and reminding me that everyone deserves our time, attention and respect. We don't have to agree or participate when someone is doing things that are wrong but we do have to respect them as children of God and recognize that everyone deserves friends. Perhaps we may end up being a good influence on them and help them to behave better. Today's Gospel teaches us the very same lesson. When Jesus asks to go to Zacchaeus' house, many people thought he was wrong to hang-out with a man who cheated and stole from others. Jesus ignored them and went to Zacchaeus' house anyway. Because Jesus respected him enough to spend time with him and teach him about loving others and being fair, Zacchaeus became a better person who returned money he had stolen and gave extra to people he had hurt. I hope that those people who were upset with Jesus because he went to Zacchaeus' house learned to respect everyone the way Jesus does because we all have something to contribute to making the world a better place. If we ignore certain people because we don't like how they look, how they act, or what they believe, we lose the opportunity to learn what it is that God gave them to make them special.

Discussion:

1. How do you think Zacchaeus felt knowing that most people didn't like him?
2. How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus wanted to go to his house?
3. Don't name names but think about someone you know who might be like Zacchaeus, someone who is thought of as "a bad kid" who tends to misbehave. Do you think that person knows how people think of him/her? How do you think they feel about that?
4. How do you think that person would feel if you spent some time with them?
5. What would you need to do, to be able to befriend someone like that? (Make sure you know right from wrong, be able to make good choices based on that knowledge, and be able to stand up to others when they are making bad choices.)

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Activity: Up a Tree Without a Zacchaeus

Materials Needed: A large piece of paper or cardboard, tape, paper leaves, a cut-out of Zacchaeus on cardstock, a blindfold, crayons/markers, pencils/pens

Pre-Class Preparation:

1. Create a tree trunk and branches on a large piece of paper or cardboard. Do not draw leaves on it. Hang it on the wall at the height of your students.
2. Create or find on the internet an outline of a leaf. Copy enough of these on green paper so everyone in the class can have one. Cut them out.
3. Create or find a fun, informal picture of Zacchaeus. Glue it or print it onto cardstock and cut it out.

Directions:

1. Give each student a leaf.
2. Instruct the class to write or draw something on the leaf indicating what special gift they have that contributes to the good of the school, the parish, their family or the world.
3. As each student completes their leaf they can tape it to the tree.
4. After all of the leaves are taped to the tree, play a version of *Pin The Tail On The Donkey* called *Tape Zacchaeus To The Tree* to remind them to treat everyone with kindness and respect the way that Jesus treated Zacchaeus, and to learn from Zacchaeus how important it is to want to hang-out with Jesus and to listen to Jesus.