

## Thirty-first Sunday Ordinary time C-October 30, 2022

Wisdom 11:22-12:2; Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13, 14; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2; Luke 19:1-10

Hymn for Presentation of the Gifts: "O Beauty, Ever Ancient," Roc O'Connor, published by Oregon Catholic Press

Homily-Father Ed Hislop

The words of today's scripture are wondrous to some, ominous to others: *"Before the Lord the whole universe is a grain."* *"But God has mercy on all and overlooks people's sins."* *"God's Spirit is in all things!"* *"We pray always for you that God may make you worthy of his calling and bring to fulfillment every good purpose and effort."* *"Come down quickly for I must stay at your house."* **"AND THEY ALL BEGAN TO GRUMBLE!"** Wondrous and ominous as we continue our reflection on the life and ministry of our Diocesan Church.

The conversation we enter today with God is spoken in the midst of a world, country and church divided, hesitant, mistrustful, and filled with "grumbling."

The grumbling is sometimes so loud and boisterous that God's word of mercy, which overlooks sins—loving all into a change of heart and mind—can go unheard, unbelieved, and untrusted. Words of promise and hope too easily replaced with judgement, narrowness, lies and fear.

Each of us, in varying ways, feel all of that in our own heart and spirit, in our homes and work, in our nation and our church. We feel mercy and judgement, forgiveness and mistrust.

But today we hear Jesus speak to us, all perched from our own places of "seeing," our own "high perch" of viewing life as we want to see.

Come down quickly from that "high place" from which you think you see. Come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house. At your house, the place you live, the place of your security, the place of your world, with all its struggles, joys, disappointments, loss and yes even into the midst of your sins. I must stay, Jesus says, at that house,

in that place, you call home. Despite all the grumbling, judgement, and disappointment from both you and others around you, despite your failures or sins, I will stay at your house.

Zacchaeus, the known "public sinner," unlike all the others, did not grumble, but received Jesus with a joyous and hopeful hospitality.

This "sinner" gave Jesus a home in his home, he opened the door of his home and his life. In so doing the life of Zacchaeus was transformed, he was able to see what he could not see from his lofty "self-righteous" perch. He saw the many in need, he discovered the truth of poverty's oppression in this new conversation with one who loved him, who accepted him and who embraced him in merciful compassion.

Zacchaeus embraced a new spirit—a new life of giving, reconciling, and trusting, because he was seen, heard, and respected; because of that he could come down from his lofty perch and become, as the psalmist sang today, *"loving and forgiving, slow to anger, and rich in kindness,"* as this living guest who came to his house had just been to him.

The poor and the maltreated became, for Zacchaeus, persons, not statistics. Persons among whom he lived and whose lives he could touch and transform. He discovered the worthiness of his calling to be merciful, caring, and generous.

Zacchaeus embraced the work and the challenge of opening the doors of his home and life to welcome the lives of the many in need, despite the grumbling of those who resist such hospitality and generosity. He could do this because he was seen and heard; he was embraced with mercy and compassion, and

finally chose to “give and repay without judgement because he had received.

Zacchaeus finally saw the “spirit of God in all things,” and in every person, not from some lofty height but from the places people live. Zacchaeus discovered, as we must, that God “loves all things that are, and loathes nothing that he has made.”

Today, in many ways, we are all Zacchaeus, strong, weak, sinful, eager, and doubtful; each of us on our

own perch, some of us driven to whatever tree we have climbed to see the world we want to see. But then one passes by whose “beauty is ever ancient and ever new,” “the mirror of our life renewed, ”slow to anger and rich in kindness.”

The words we hear invite a new spirit and a daring hope: “COME DOWN QUICKLY, FOR TODAY I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE.”

**JESUS IS ALIVE, HE IS IN OUR HOME!**

