

2016

- Remember that Tuesday is All Saints Day—a holy day of obligation, of course. Masses are Monday in White Rock at 6 p.m., and Tuesday at IHM at 6:30 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 6 p.m.
- ...and, of course, that makes Wednesday All Souls Day—not a holy day of obligation, but yet a wonderful day of grace to pray for the eternal rest of our loves ones who have passed away.
- The time between All Saints Day and November 8 is a period of special grace from the treasury of the Church, as she allows a plenary indulgence each day for visiting any cemetery and praying for the deceased...with the normal basic requirements for a plenary indulgence, of course. Check the indulgence link on the front page of our website for more info.
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- You know...some Catholics are flummoxed when asked about some Church doctrines—but it need not be so.
- Non-Catholic Christians challenges tend to be relatively few: Purgatory & indulgences, praying to saints, Marian doctrines such as her perpetual virginity, Immaculate Conception and the like, and the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ.
- So...find out about those! Pick up the Catechism and learn! So many fallen-away Catholics threw up their hands and abandoned the faith at the least challenge; there is no need for that. Learn the faith, and go out armed for battle, as it were.
- As Paul says in our second reading today: “...*powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him...*”
- So if you're short in the knowledge of the faith or don't understand something, climb the tree of Church teaching...so that, like Zacchaeus in our Gospel, you might see Christ clearly...and He will call to you and remain with you.
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Ol' Zacchaeus. Can you imagine the surprise he must have had on his face when Jesus called out to him by name?

- Zacchaeus is a rich man...a head of all the tax collectors...and so would have been shunned by his fellow Jews for working for the Romans occupiers.
- But we see in our Gospel that, despite his having given in to the temptations to be important, rich and influential...God's grace had not stopped working in him. His conscience must have accused him daily...and in his heart longed for return to good standing with his people...and with God.
- But...could he still have hope...even with all of his sinfulness?
- And so...like the prodigal who peers in from the fringes of a Mass or a Bible study—fearful, and yet hopeful—he wonders: “*Will this man manifest the power of God for me to see? Can he show me something to tip the scale and make me believe...make me quit this wretched life I have chosen?*”
- And...Jesus does.
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- What does Jesus give him? Acceptance, and forgiveness.
- Acceptance in calling Zacchaeus by name and coming to his house... despite the whispers of the disapproving surrounding crowd.
- And, with Zacchaeus' acknowledgement of his sin and declaring his repentance...Jesus grants forgiveness, for here, too, is a son of Abraham, and a beloved child of God.
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- How like the parable of the Prodigal Son this story is. Zacchaeus, like that wayward son, realizes his foolishness and seeks return to God...and when he expresses his sorrow and desire to repent, is accepted back home with open arms.
- This is a great lesson for us, for in inevitable human weakness we sin against others, and they sin against us. Scripture says that even the righteous man sins seven times...something Jesus must have been recalling when He said: “*...if your brother sins, rebuke [correct] him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven*

times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4 RSV)

- Because what is of greater importance—sin, or reconciliation? What is of greater value—a petty offense, or the attainment of eternal life?
- Shall we, in pride and hurt feelings, hold back the forgiveness demanded of us by Christ...because in holding back forgiveness, we hold back hope. We hold back love.
- How many times have we entered the confessional seeking God's mercy? Are we, then, to withhold mercy, and then expect to receive it?
- So we see the justice in Jesus' warning: "*...with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get...*" (Matthew 7:2), and "*...if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" (Matthew 6:14-15)
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- Jesus accepts Zacchaeus when others would not...offering God's forgiveness to this sinner of sinners...and so Zacchaeus: "*...received him with joy*"...a joy and relief that only reconciliation, forgiveness and reacceptance can bring.
- It is within our own grasp...our own power...to offer such hope to all from whom we might be estranged, or who might have harmed us...or, whom we may have harmed. We may have to make the first move toward reconciliation in either case.
- Our first reading from the book of Wisdom says of God: "*...you overlook people's sins that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made...*"
- Jesus, likewise, looked upon Zacchaeus with love...because all men and women—including we sinners—are not only creations of God, but created in the IMAGE of God...and thus are called to be "mirrors" of Christ.

- When we climb the tree of humility and repentance, Jesus calls US by name, and says “...*come down quickly, for today I stay [with you].*”
- And the one who greets him with faith and joy humbly replies: “*Lord, I am not worthy to receive you under my roof, but only say the word and I shall be healed.*”
- And then Jesus declares to all creation: “*Today salvation has come to this house...For I have come to recover what was lost.*”

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time—Year C

Reading 1

Wis 11:22-12:2

Before the LORD the whole universe is as a grain from a balance
or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth.
But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things;
and you overlook people's sins that they may repent.
For you love all things that are
and loathe nothing that you have made;
for what you hated, you would not have fashioned.
And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it;
or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?
But you spare all things, because they are yours,
O LORD and lover of souls,
for your imperishable spirit is in all things!
Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little,
warn them and remind them of the sins they are committing,
that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O LORD!

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13, 14

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

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.

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

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

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

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

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

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.

The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

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

Reading II
2 Thes 1:11-2:2

Brothers and sisters:
We always pray for you,
that our God may make you worthy of his calling
and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose
and every effort of faith,
that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you,
and you in him,
in accord with the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask you, brothers and sisters,
with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
and our assembling with him,
not to be shaken out of your minds suddenly, or to be alarmed
either by a "spirit," or by an oral statement,
or by a letter allegedly from us
to the effect that the day of the Lord is at hand.

Gospel
Lk 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town.
Now a man there named Zacchaeus,
who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man,
was seeking to see who Jesus was;
but he could not see him because of the crowd,
for he was short in stature.
So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus,
who was about to pass that way.
When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said,
"Zacchaeus, come down quickly,
for today I must stay at your house."
And he came down quickly and received him with joy.
When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying,
"He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner."
But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord,
"Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor,
and if I have extorted anything from anyone
I shall repay it four times over."
And Jesus said to him,
"Today salvation has come to this house
because this man too is a descendant of Abraham.
For the Son of Man has come to seek
and to save what was lost."