

November 3, 2019

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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The readings for this weekend get to the core of a central message Jesus has for us: He loves us, has mercy for us, and wishes to be more fully in communion with us.



It is really easy to think we are too far gone, too far from Jesus' love to believe we are worth it. And it is also just as easy to apply those same sentiments to those around us. Think about those who saw Jesus embrace Zaccheus, sin and all - they could not believe Jesus would do such a thing. They did not want to believe that Jesus would willingly embrace a tax collector. But that is exactly what Jesus does! And Jesus' point was that embracing the sinners and the lowly were not just something he should do, but something everyone is called to. He wants to embrace us, he wants us to know he loves us in spite of our sins, because he loves us that much.

This week's readings contain a lot of wisdom, but the center of it all is love. And we don't just hear that messaging from Jesus this week, we see it concretely acted out. Jesus received Zaccheus **with Joy** even before Zaccheus publicly repented and vowed to reconcile what he had done. Jesus doesn't love us only when we repent, but because we are His. *"But you spare all things, because they are yours, O LORD and lover of souls, for your imperishable spirit is in all things!" God loves us because we were created in his image and his likeness*".

This is not to say that we do not need to repent; this is in fact what we should do often. We need to see Zaccheus as a model. We should be racing after Jesus to catch a glimpse of him, and be ready to realign our lives. We are constantly called to have the faith that we are a part of something larger and greater than ourselves, and to cherish that. God's deep love for us, and the love we should have for ourselves and others is what the scriptures call us to embrace this week. Jesus came to seek and save all that were lost, and that includes us. Inclusivity and community are two pillars of our charism. Jesus' love is the most inclusive of all, and we are called to model that within our communities as well as to everyone we encounter.

How are we called to be like Zaccheus this week? How can we embrace Jesus, with our sins and all, knowing he loves us more than we can ever know?