

Tuesday of the Thirty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (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 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.”

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”

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Today, I'll be Zacchaeus. This personage was a wealthy man and the chief of the Publicans; I have more than I need and, perhaps too often, I behave like a Publican and forget about Jesus Christ. Amidst the crowd, Jesus seeks Zacchaeus; today, amidst our world, He is precisely looking for me: “come down quickly, for today I

must stay at your house” (Lk 19:5).

Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus; if he does not run ahead and climb up the sycamore tree, he will not be able to see him. I would also like to see God's deeds as much as possible! but I'm not too sure I am willing to behave like a fool as Zacchaeus did. To allow for Jesus' reaction, the disposition of the chief among the Jericho Publicans is required; and, if he does not hurry up, he may eventually lose the opportunity to be touched by Jesus and be therefore saved. Maybe I have had too many occasions to meet Jesus and maybe it is about time to be courageous, to leave home to meet Him and invite Him to enter me, so that He can also say about me: “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.” (Lk 19:9-10).

Zacchaeus receives Jesus into his home, his life and his heart, even though he probably does not feel worthy of a visit like that. His conversion is total: he begins by giving up any ambition for riches, followed with the intention to share his goods and he ends up with the strong decision to impart justice, while remedying his sins. Maybe, for a long time, Jesus has been asking me something similar, but I did not want to hear Him and turned my deaf ears; I must still be converted.

St. Maximus said: “There is nothing God loves more and pleases him best as a man converting with true regret.” Let him help me to make it come true today.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“What is carried out with a disposition of sad and forced mood does not deserve gratitude nor has nobility. So, when we do good, we must do it, not sadly, but with joy” (Saint Gregory of Nazianzen)

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“The term “eternal life” is intended to give a name to this known “unknown”. It would be like plunging into the ocean of infinite love. We can only attempt to grasp the idea that such a moment is life in the full sense. We must think along these lines if we want to understand the object of Christian hope.” (Benedict XVI)

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“Holy Communion separates us from sin. The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 1393)