

Homily for Zacchaeus Sunday St. Luke 19: 1-10

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Today's Gospel is about an encounter with Christ. Jesus' healing and teaching ministry attracted a crowd as he traveled. One person that it attracted was Zacchaeus. More than simple curiosity.

- Zacchaeus was a tax collector. A publican. We will have more on another Publican next week, but the basic fact is that he had made a deal with the world that gave him riches, but that still left him yearning.
 - Born a Jew. Jews in this area were ruled by Rome. He collected taxes from the Jews for the Romans. A "turncoat", a pariah to the people. Made lots of money. Legally, but immorally. Had ties with influential people. He was "successful" according to the rules of the world.
 - But he yearned for more. As will all who seek success only according the rules of the world.
 - He must have known or suspected that this Christ might change his world. Christ's authority was not through the Romans. Nor was it even from among the Jewish powers of that time. It was something else. Something that, due to its strength and autonomy, threatened the status quo. Along with Zacchaeus' place in it.
 - But he took that risk. First risking his reputation by climbing a tree. Then by publicly accepting Christ's invitation to dine with Him at his house.
- Christ wanted into Zacchaeus' house. To bless and transform it. Look at the transformation:
 - He "gave half of his goods to the poor"
 - He made good with those whom he had cheated.
 - Most importantly of all, he called Jesus his "Lord". He put Christ in the center of his life.
- And listen to the words that Christ speaks to him: "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"
- Christ reminds us in Revelations 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
 - Like Zacchaeus, all of us have made compromises with the corruption of this world. It has hurt us. It has hurt our relations with one another, and with our God.
 - But despite this, Christ is knocking at your door. He did not come to save the saints, but the sinners (e.g. Matthew 9:13). That means us.

Let Him in. Put Him at the center of your heart and of your home, so that he may say to you: "This day salvation has come to you and your home."