

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

You spare all things because all things are yours,
Lord, lover of life.

First Reading

I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

Psalm

You will show me the path of life,
The fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

Communion Antiphon

The Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost. *Gospel*

God of power and mercy,
only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.

May we live the faith we profess
and trust your promise of eternal life.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Wisdom 11: 22–12: 2; Ps. 144 (145); 2 Thess. 1: 11–2: 2; Luke 19: 1–10

Soichi Watanabe (b.1949), *Jesus and Zacchaeus*
Christian Art Association, Japan



'Hurry, because
I must stay at
your house
today!'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C
30th October 2022

The Son of Man has come to seek out
and save what was lost

The readings for this Sunday once again celebrate God's boundless love for each and every one of us. No matter how far we go astray, God continues to seek us out and welcome us back.

The **First Reading** reminds us that God has created everything in love. Nothing exists or survives without God's *imperishable spirit*. It is because of the depth of God's love that our faults and failings can be forgiven, and we can rely on God to guide us away from evil.

The **Psalm** is a wonderful hymn of praise to the God we acknowledge as King of our hearts. The verses echo the first reading in reminding us how completely God loves us. God will raise us up to life when we fall.

In the **Second Reading**, St Paul urges the Thessalonians – and ourselves – to continue to focus on doing what good the Lord asks of us. It is through our lives that God's name will be glorified.

The **Gospel** story of Zacchaeus reiterates that salvation awaits anyone who repents of their sinful ways. Just as Jesus urges Zacchaeus down from the tree, so, too, he calls each one of us. All we need do is seek his presence, and, acknowledging our faults and failings, welcome him into every aspect of our lives.

This week, as we continue to pray for an end to hostilities throughout the world, we ask that the Lord will help us to hear and respond to his invitation and welcome him joyfully into our lives.



Opening Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service,
grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling
to receive the things you have promised.

First Reading Wisdom 11: 22–12: 2

In your sight, Lord, the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales, like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground. Yet you are merciful to all, because you can do all things and overlook our sins so that we can repent. Yes, you love all that exists, you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it.

And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist, how be conserved if not called forth by you? You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life, you whose imperishable spirit is in all.

Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend, you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned, so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord.

As I settle myself for this prayer in whatever way works best for me, I notice how I feel. If I have worries or distractions, I ask the Lord to look after them while I pray. I take time to relax my mind and body, and open myself to the Lord's presence.

Once I feel ready, I begin to read slowly through the text, out loud if I can, noticing each word and making them my own. As I read a second time, I pay attention to any particular phrase which strikes me.

I spend some time pondering what arises for me.

The writer of the text speaks of God looking down on his creation. Perhaps I can see God looking down at me, as I become aware of his 'imperishable spirit' within me, as in every other created thing. If I find this difficult, I give myself time to simply bask in God's love and mercy.

As I sit with God, I reflect on what is happening in my life at the moment. Is God perhaps drawing to my attention attitudes or actions I need to amend? Maybe I'm not noticing what I need to address, or even actively ignoring something that I need to face up to?

I talk to the Lord about anything that is troubling me, and with confidence in his loving forgiveness, ask for the graces I need to be the person God created me to be.

When I am ready, I end my prayer giving thanks to God.

Our Father ...

Gospel Luke 19: 1–10

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town, when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost'.

I let my mind and body settle gently, and without hurry. I become aware of God's loving gaze on me, and ask the Holy Spirit to be beside me in my prayer, helping me to open my heart to whatever God wants me to hear today.

I may like to enter into this familiar story in my imagination. Perhaps I put myself in Zacchaeus's shoes, desperately trying to get a better look at Jesus. Frustrated by the depth of the crowd, I scramble up into the branches of a tree to get a better view. I've been so longing to know more about this man, Jesus. How does it feel to hear him call me, as he notices me clinging to the branch? What joy fills my heart as Jesus says he must stay at my house?

Leaving Zacchaeus clambering down from the tree, I reflect on how it feels to know that Jesus sees me too, and desires to be with me in my house today and every day, regardless of how unworthy I might think I am.

Zacchaeus's stature and the depth of the crowd prevent him from seeing Jesus. I reflect on this. What stands in the way of my relationship with Jesus? What can I do to get past that? Taking as long as I need, I talk to Jesus about this as one friend to another.

I draw my prayer to a close, thanking the Lord for his presence in whatever words feel right.