

Sunday Message

31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 30 October 2022 • Psalter Week 3

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

LUKE 19:1-10

Today's Gospel is a beautiful story about conversion and how it can happen even to the most unlikely people.

Zacchaeus is one of the chief tax collectors in Jericho for the hated Roman occupiers. His occupation has made him rich, but it has also made him an outcast. To his people, he is a traitor and public sinner.

Zacchaeus hears that Jesus is coming to town and is anxious to see him. He climbs a sycamore tree to get a better view.

As he sits there watching, he nearly dies of shock when Jesus stops right under his tree and asks to spend the night in his house. The crowd is shocked, too – and outraged. "He's gone to a sinner's house as a guest," they murmur.

But Jesus ignores them. He looks Zacchaeus in the eye, sees the good that's in him, and invites him to change. And Zacchaeus changes. Feeling loved and accepted by a fellow Jew for the first time in years makes him a new person. He joyfully receives Jesus and opens his house, heart, and coffers. He will not cheat anybody any more; instead, he will pay back those he has cheated four times the amount. And he will give half his possessions to those who are poor.

Now that he is a follower of Jesus, Zacchaeus becomes a new person. He is aware that he has ripped off people in the past and that such behaviour does not correspond with Jesus' way. Because Jesus looked on him with love, Zacchaeus can now look on others and himself with love. His life and manner of living are transformed. ■

REFLECT

Have you ever been called a saint? Do you describe your fellow parishioners as saints? Probably not. That type of talk makes us feel embarrassed and uncomfortable.

But calling other Christians saints was a common practice in the early Church. The Acts of the Apostles describes Saul's persecution of the "saints in Jerusalem" (Acts 9:13). Later in Acts, Paul admits that "I put many of the saints in prison" (Acts 26:10). Paul ends his letter to the Philippians with the words, "All the saints send you greetings" (4:22).

Members of the early Church referred to each other as saints. Saints were to be found among the spiritually weak and the spiritually strong, the educated and the uneducated, the poor and the well-off. Anyone baptised in the name of Jesus was among the saints.

Over the centuries, the understanding of sainthood narrowed, and it began to be applied only to exceptionally holy people. Church authorities took over the saint-making process. Candidates had to meet

specific criteria before being formally declared a saint. Sometimes the process is swift. Think of St Teresa of Calcutta or Pope St John Paul II. More often, it takes decades or even centuries.

Even though the feast of All Saints honours the multitude of ordinary saints who will never be canonised, we tend to think of sainthood as applying only to a select few. For most of us, being canonised seems out of reach.

Pope Francis wants to change this way of thinking. In 2018, he published an apostolic letter, entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), on our call to be saints. In it, he reminds us of the Second Vatican Council's teaching that "all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect".

Pope Francis is well aware that being holy is not easy, and he suggests practical steps we can take to become saints. The key, he writes, is the Beatitudes, which are the Christian's identity card. He offers a

SAY

Lord, help me to be more holy day by day. Help me to draw ever closer to you.

LEARN

We are all called to be saints.

The Christian is called to constant conversion.

PRAY

Remember your deceased loved ones on Wednesday, All Souls' Day. Pray that they may be counted among the communion of saints.

DO

Visit the grave(s) of your beloved dead this week. Ask the Lord to take them to himself.



practical example to show that everyday sanctity is possible.

"This holiness to which the Lord calls you," he writes, "will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: 'No, I will not speak badly of anyone.' This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step." Each of these gestures is an example of holiness any of us can make any day.

We are not asked to go around calling each other saints. But we are called to be saints. Living according to the Beatitudes is how we do it. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Forsake me not, O Lord, my God;
be not far from me!
Make haste and come to my help,
O Lord, my strong salvation!

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Wisdom 11:22-12:2

A reading from the book of Wisdom.
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 men's sins so that they 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.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 144

Response:

I will bless your name for ever,
O God my King.

- I will give you glory, O God my King,
I will bless your name for ever.
I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever. (R.)
- The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)
- All your creatures shall thank you,
O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their
blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God. (R.)
- The Lord is faithful in all his words
and loving in all his deeds.
The Lord supports all who fall
and raises all who are bowed down. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to
the Thessalonians.

We pray continually that our God will make
you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil
all your desires for goodness and complete
all that you have been doing through faith;
because in this way the name of our Lord
Jesus Christ will be glorified in you and you
in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

To turn now, brothers, to the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ and how we shall
all be gathered round him: please do not
get excited too soon or alarmed by any
prediction or rumour or any letter claiming to
come from us, implying that the Day of the
Lord has already arrived.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heavens!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 19:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these sacrificial offerings, O Lord,
become for you a pure oblation,
and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of your power, O Lord,
increase in us, we pray,
so that, renewed by these heavenly
Sacraments,
we may be prepared by your gift
for receiving what they promise.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

