

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Jn 3:16

Alleluia, alleluia!

God loved the world so much, he gave  
his only Son,  
that all who believe in him might have  
eternal life.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Lk 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.

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# Reflections on the Gospel

**THE CHALLENGE OF INCLUSION**

The chief tax collector, Zacchaeus, faces a double barrier in his attempt to see Jesus. He is too small of stature to see over the crowd

him. So, like a curious youngster, he climbs a tree.

It is hard not to see a comic touch when Jesus stands beneath the tree and bids Zacchaeus to come down and be his host that day.

But the tax collector's hospitality to Jesus, while a great joy for him, soon becomes a problem for everyone else. They mutter and murmur: 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house.'

Sinner or not, Zacchaeus declares a policy of extravagant generosity: half of his wealth will go to the poor and anyone defrauded will receive compensation four-fold.

This draws from Jesus a truly memorable declaration: 'Today salvation has come to this house.' What Zacchaeus has experienced amounts to a virtual 'definition' of salvation: the joy of being found by the Lord, conversion of heart, transformation of life, and inclusion within the community ('this man too is a son of Abraham').

But what of the crowd? The inclusion of the tax collector in the community demands conversion of them as well. Are *they* also transformed? We do not know. Here is where the episode holds out a wider challenge. Salvation is not just about Jesus' kindness to individuals. It has a social dimension as well. Are we comfortable with all whom Jesus wants to include in the community of the Kingdom?

Brendan Byrne, SJ



# THE SAVING WORD

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

03 NOVEMBER 2019

**FIRST READING**

Wis 11:22-12:2

A reading from the book of Wisdom

*You have mercy on all things because you love  
everything that exists*

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.

**RESP PSALM** Ps 144:1-2, 8-11, 13-14. R. cf. v. 1

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my  
king and my God.**

1. 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.**

2. 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.**



3. 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.**

4. 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 Thess 1:11-2:2

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

*The name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified  
in you and you in him.*

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.