



CELEBRATING AT HOME

31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Making assumptions (Luke 19:1-10)



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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church
in this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

Lord Jesus,

you call us to repentance.

Lord Jesus,

you heal us with forgiveness.

Lord Jesus,

you redeem us and make us your own.

Scripture Reading (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.'

Reflection - Making assumptions

It is all too easy to make assumptions about other people which turn out not to be accurate. In the

Gospel today, the crowd assumes that Zacchaeus is wicked and sinful, a traitor to his people because he is a tax collector.

The scene for the Gospel is, as usual, set by the first reading from the Book of Wisdom – in praise of a God whose love for what he has created allows him to overlook sins. God is all-powerful and all-merciful, the lover of all he creates and the lover of all life, 'whose imperishable spirit is in all'. God corrects his people through forgiveness, drawing people away from evil and towards trust in himself.

This loving, forgiving action of God is on show in the Gospel story. Where we might have expected Jesus' to condemn Zacchaeus, as the crowds do by excluding him and labelling him a 'sinner', Jesus recognises the good that Zacchaeus does even in his so-called 'sinful' situation (being a tax collector on behalf of the Roman government). Salvation does not lie in *appearing* to be good, but in *being* good. Such a person is truly a 'son of Abraham' – one of God's chosen.

It might be helpful to note here that in Zacchaeus' speech about intending to give half of his property to the poor and so on, the verbs are usually translated into future tense, as in the version which appears here. In the original Greek manuscripts, however, the verbs are unambiguously in the present tense. So Zacchaeus is describing how he presently conducts his life – a defence against the condemnation of the crowd that he is a 'sinner' and a traitor.

It is the crowd who turns out to be 'what was lost', not Zacchaeus.

Read against the background of Luke's community, the story raises questions about judging on appearances, who is truly at rights with God, who is truly the sinner. An echo of last week's parable about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

Most of all, building from the first reading, it is a story about the God who does not judge and punish as we would, but who loves, forgives, heals and reconciles people to one another.

When Jesus pronounces Zacchaeus a 'son of Abraham' he removes the barrier between the crowd and Zacchaeus and reconciles them.

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Prayers of Intercession

Lord, may what we say and do
be marked with your compassion and love for all.

You constantly call us to conversion.
**May we respond ever more fully to your invitation
to life in all its fullness.**

When we are appalled by our own sinfulness,
help us to trust in your mercy and love to heal us.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus,
we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

Lord God,
fill us with the spirit of your Son
that we may witness his love in our families,
our parishes and our world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the blessing of God be among us,
and remain with us for ever. Amen.





Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites of Australia & Timor-Leste at a time when many cannot gather together as we usually do to celebrate the Eucharist. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family at this time.



The Carmelites
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