

INSPIRED BY THE ENCOUNTER OF JESUS & ZACCHEUS

31st SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – 30 OCTOBER 2022



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INCLUSIVE

As I prepare Reflections 5 and 6 in the Social Justice Series, I need to stop continually and think about the variety of justice issues around the world between 2000 and 2022.

One of the recurrent themes is being *inclusive*.

Today's Gospel was a life-changing encounter for Zaccheus. Jesus invited him into the inclusive love of God.

Two recent milestones about the church being far more *inclusive*, were:

1. A Caritas Conference on [**"The Full Face of Humanity: Women in leadership for a just society"**](#) has concluded in the UNESCO Building in Paris. Speakers and participants identified barriers for women in leadership and proposed solutions. A Report will be forthcoming.
2. **Salvatore Cernuzio** in the Vatican News article [**Synod: Voices of excluded heard in Document for Continental Phase**](#), on 27 October 2022 highlighted some of the inclusive voices for the Synod next year. Recently about 50 people gathered to prepare the next document.

"Here are the poor and the indigenous, families, remarried divorcees and single parents, LGBTQ people, and women who feel excluded. Here are the victims of abuse or trafficking or racism. Here are priests, laicized priests, and lay people; Christians and those 'distant' from the Church, those who want reforms on priesthood and the role of women, and those who "following the liturgical developments of the Second Vatican Council, do not feel at ease." Here are those who live in countries of martyrdom, those who deal daily with violence and conflict, those who fight against witchcraft and tribalism. In short, here within the approximately 45 pages that make up the Document for the Continental Stage (DCS) is the whole of humanity, with its wounds and fears, its imperfections and demands... In particular, the Document notes "a series of tensions" that the synodal path has brought out: "We should not be afraid of them, but articulate them in a process of constant communal discernment, so as to harness them as a source of energy without them becoming destructive" (DCS, 71). The first is "listening as openness to welcome" starting from "a desire for radical inclusion." "No one is excluded" is, in fact, one of the key concepts of the text...

Indeed, the summaries show that many communities have understood synodality as “an invitation to listen to those who feel exiled from the Church.” There are many who feel “denigrated, neglected, misunderstood,” first and foremost “women and young people who do not feel that their gifts and abilities are recognized.” Being seriously listened to was therefore a “transformative” experience.”

GOSPEL OF LUKE 19:1-10

Last week we heard the parable of the ‘Pharisee and the Tax Collector’. Jesus told this parable while on the road going from Galilee towards Jerusalem. In today’s account, he had arrived at Jericho and would begin the climb to Jerusalem.

A tax-collector meets Jesus.
We know his name. It is Zacchaeus.
He is an arch tax-collector, what we’d call a chief tax-collector.

He was *‘plousios’* which translates as wealthy or rich.
We know he was short in stature and had enough fitness to run and climb a sycamore tree.
He had initiative. He climbed the tree so that he could see Jesus when he passed by.
Jesus looked at him and called Zacchaeus by name. Personally.
And told him to hurry and come down,
as he was going *‘meinai’* (Gk. *δεῖ μὲν*), to remain, at his house.

We, as Christians, ask Jesus to remain, to stay with us.
We can grumble and offer excuses, but notice how Zacchaeus responded.
He hurried down and – *‘hupedexato auton chairon’* –welcomed Jesus with joy.
Let us read the Gospel passage together.

*‘He entered Jericho and was passing through it.
A man was there named Zacchaeus;
he was a chief tax-collector and was rich.
He was trying to see who Jesus was,
but on account of the crowd he could not,
because he was short in stature.
So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him,
because he was going to pass that way.
When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him,
‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.’
So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.
All who saw it began to grumble and said,
‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.’
Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord,
‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor;
and if I have defrauded anyone of anything,
I will pay back four times as much.’
Then Jesus said to him, **‘Today salvation has come to this house,
because he too is a son of Abraham.
For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.’***

The encounter with Jesus created a change of heart in Zaccheus.
Zacchaeus decided that he would give to the poor
and would reimburse anyone he had defrauded, not once, but four times the amount.
Zacchaeus spoke to Jesus, and nearby, people were listening to him.
Zacchaeus made a personal witness and a public witness.

Jesus saw the genuine change of heart in Zacchaeus.
He said to him, *'Today salvation has come to this house'*.
He affirmed him as a son of Abraham.
Then Jesus spoke of his ministry as he came to seek and to save the lost.

We share with others the times we have been lost and how Jesus heals and saves us.
We too witness to Jesus. But not in a boastful way.
Remembering the parable of Jesus last week,
we can say too, *"God, be merciful to me, a sinner"*.
After the encounter with Zacchaeus in Jericho, being not far from Jerusalem,
the disciples expected that the kingdom of God would immediately to appear.
Jesus corrected them by telling another parable about faithfulness over a period of time.

INSPIRATION OF ZACCHEUS

Like Zaccheus, we too are invited to show initiative.
Like Zaccheus, we too are invited to witness to Jesus in our lives.
Like Zaccheus, we too welcome Jesus into our lives.
Like Zaccheus, we too are called to help others in practical ways.

As the gifts of bread and wine are prepared and offered,
may we also place before God those in our lives who have died.

This coming Wednesday, November 2nd, is *All Souls Day*.
Masses will be in our church at 9am and 7pm.
May we be aware of the *Communion of Saints* accompanying this Celebration of the Eucharist.

At all Masses this weekend, children preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation in November, join us to receive the Apostles Creed prayer card. They will lead us in praying the Profession of Faith. Thank you children.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/103022.cfm>