CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, October 30, 2022

A Little Man's Way to Jesus

Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

Wisdom 11:22-12:2
2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2
Luke 19:1-10



Today is the day we can discover a new way of living, a way that is truly fulfilling and empowering. We need only answer Jesus' call and take our first steps on this adventure which, if we are faithful to it, will lead us to everlasting life in heaven.

What do you suppose drove Zacchaeus to go out and look for Jesus?

As the chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was a wealthy man and very busy. He was hated by the people who considered him a traitor and a crook. Zacchaeus had every reason to avoid the crowds that gathered to see Jesus and every reason to think that, as a sinner, he had no right to even lay his eyes on such a holy man.

However, something compelled him to leave his home, run into the streets of Jericho and even climb up a tree to get a glimpse of the wonderworker from Galilee.

Could it be that there was something missing in his life? Despite all his wealth, despite all his power, he was not happy. As a short man, he may have hoped that wealth and power would have made him tall in the eyes of others. However, no matter how much he had, he still felt small inside. Could it be that, when Zacchaeus heard the news that Jesus was passing through town, he hoped that this would be his chance to discover the love and the meaning

he had been striving for all his life? Is this what compelled him to climb that sycamore tree — the desire for a more abundant and fulfilling life?

In this, Zacchaeus is very much like us. We run after happiness, fulfillment, and pleasure. We dream about what our lives would be like if we just had more money, more friends or more comforts. As hard as we work, happiness always seems just beyond our grasp. No matter how much money or possessions we have, they never seem to be enough. We grow bored with them and look for something new. In the end, we are left with the same ache within us.

What a surprise it must have been for Zacchaeus to hear Jesus call out his name. He doesn't say, "Hey, you in the tree," but "Zacchaeus." Jesus not only singled him out from the crowd but already knew who he was. Zacchaeus climbed down quickly from the tree because this was his chance to meet the one whom his heart longed for. Saint Luke goes on to tell us that Zacchaeus "received [Jesus] with joy", a joy that no doubt had been eluding him all his life and that he finally found in the person of Jesus Christ.

Like Zacchaeus, we can discover the one whom our hearts long for, the one who can give us true peace and joy. All we have to do is invite him into our hearts and into our homes. We do not have to convince him that we deserve it because we are nice people. We do not have to grovel because of all the sins we have committed. Like Zacchaeus, we will discover that he already knows us. We will discover that he is already calling out to us before we reach out to him. And we will soon discover that whatever we have to give up to welcome him into our homes pales in comparison to the joy he gives.

— Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

Prayer

Living God,
We long for your love in our hearts.
This world has left us cold and alone.
Fill us with the life that only you can give.
Call our name, and we will run to you.
Pick us out from the midst of the crowd,
And we will welcome you.
Tell us what we must do to bring you into our homes,
And we will do it.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.