

31st Sunday Year C



*Jesus looked up and said,
“Zacchaeus, come down quickly for today I must stay at your house.”*

THE GOSPEL Luke 19:1-10

Oh Jesus,
stay at our house!

Call us by name, take time with us!

Let our hearts run over with the joy you bring,
and spread it to everyone, everywhere.

We'll gladly give it to your poor,
and to our neighbors,
as Zacchaeus
finally
did.

Oh do say it to us, Lord,
that you must stay
at our house
this day—
and all
days.



THE FIRST READING Wisdom 11:22-12:2

*But you spare all things, because they are yours,
O Lord and lover of souls.*

Awesome God,

the universe is just a drop of dew for you.
so much higher you are,
so far beyond
our limits.

Yet,
you pitch your
tent among us
and dwell in our everyday.
We know you are above and beyond us.
But your Spirit abides in the very center of our being.

Thank you
for making a home
in the deep-down part of us.



THE SECOND READING 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Brothers and sisters: we always pray for you.

Lord,
walk with us on this journey.

We, your children, travel together.
Help us help each other
along the
way!

When we sound alarm bells—
mind and soul afraid—help us trust in you. *(Annie Osáíeck)*

REFLECTION:



Since July of this year, NASA has been releasing images from the James Webb Space Telescope, to the awe and delight of people across the globe, myself included. The first published is a deep-field image: in an area of sky that appears around as large as a grain of sand held at arm's length from our eyes on earth, the telescope captured *thousands* of galaxies, some of them up to 13 billion years old! Our planet is but a *speck* (if even that) in the vastness of the cosmos, a fact that makes our proclamation of the words in Wisdom all the more staggering: *"Before the LORD the whole universe is as a grain from a balance or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth."*

Who are we, then, to this God, and who are we in a world, let alone a universe, that often seems cold, distant, and even without meaning? As it turns out, we are the world to God, God's beloved. The Holy Spirit breathes through all of creation, from the Crab Nebula to crabs, suns to sunflowers, constellations of stars to communities of people. God recognizes God's self in all the universe and says that it is good. Gifting and recognizing God's own image and likeness in each of us human beings, God says that we are very good and demonstrates this truth by becoming one of us.

Even the lowly, the people we sell short as sinners like Zacchaeus, are held in high esteem by God the lover of all souls. So often, we get caught up in ideas of worthiness, debating who has earned a portion of God's love as though it is as scarce and nonrenewable a resource as oil. Jesus calls us down to earth and to a personal encounter with him, inviting us to accept his Father's love and his own Spirit that we may make his way our way.

When we receive Jesus and all he offers with joy, we can grow toward the heavens. Sure of our roots deep in solid ground, we will not be shaken by calls to collect as much as we can, even to the point of extortion, and hoard it for ourselves. Rather, we will see clearly the abundance of God's love and give it and God's other gifts generously, especially to the people we have cast down and out.

What would our world look like if we recognized and treated all that we have on earth as gifts? What would our world look like if we acknowledged the harm we have caused to each other and our earth and gave the "reasonable" restitution for that harm four times over? It may look as foolish as a short man scrambling up a tree. From what we read in the Gospel, it might also look like salvation, the reign of God, coming into our lives. What a gift to us on this little drop in the universe. Let us pray we accept it with open arms and joyful hearts. *(Alex Gruber – U.S.Catholic)*

