

HOMILY FOR THIRTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR OF LUKE

1. Before God the whole universe is like a grain of sand or a drop of dew
 - a. The God we believe in created the vast universe
 - b. Think of power of mountains or great storms
 - c. Vision of universe in time of book of Wisdom limited compared to what we know
 - d. The more we become aware of God, the more filled with awe and fear we could be
 - e. What could God do to us, if we were to offend Him
 - f. The dark visions of hellfire and brimstone could seem realistic
 - g. Image of powerful God is like that of a powerful dictator, would not dare to even hint a word against them
2. Wisdom is saying we really are not understanding God if we think of Him this way
 - a. God is so powerful that He does not worry about our sins
 - b. He knows us better than we know ourselves so He certainly is aware of our sins
 - c. He chooses to love us, even if we try to throw our gifts back in His face
 - d. God spares all things because He loves them
 - e. God's primary focus is to welcome us, He works to bring us back into His life
3. Jesus is that very message, God will never give up on us
 - a. Zacchaeus serves as the perfect example of that
 - b. In the eyes of most of Israel Zacchaeus is an evil man
 - c. He is the chief tax collector, being a wealthy man, suspicion he got it from the taxes he collected for Rome
 - d. Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus
 - e. He is a short man and probably wants to keep a low profile, being rather unpopular
 - f. Rather than try to force his way through the crowd, he decides to climb a tree
 - i. See Jesus from a distance without drawing attention to himself
4. Jesus surprises Zacchaeus by looking up into the tree and saying
 - a. Zacchaeus come down quickly, today I must stay at your house
 - b. Imagine how overwhelming this must have been, he just hoped to be able to see Jesus
 - i. And Jesus asks to stay at his house
 - c. Of course jealousy and anger set in almost immediately
 - d. Why is Jesus going to stay at the house of a sinner
5. Interesting how much Jesus love has touched Zacchaeus
 - a. Might expect Zacchaeus to get defensive, ignore the taunts or try to defend himself
 - b. Instead, he chooses to do major restitution
 - i. Give half of my possessions to the poor
 - ii. If I have cheated anybody, I will repay them four times over
 - c. Jesus rejoices that this man has experienced salvation and is true son of Abraham
6. When Jesus said to Zacchaeus I must stay at your home today, it seemed unfair to many
 - a. When we talk of God's patient love for all of us there can be feeling if injustice

- b. We sure happy when God forgives us, but where is the justice when he forgives our neighbor
 - c. We easily forget that God sees not just our actions but our hearts as well
 - i. When we do good, is it because we love God or other reasons
 - 1. maybe we are concerned about how we look to our neighbors
 - 2. Maybe we fear consequences of doing some act
 - 3. Sometimes we may not have even thought about why we do things, just operate out of unthinking habits
7. Example of Zacchaeus is invitation to pay attention to God
- a. Is there some way in which Jesus is asking to come into our house
 - b. Do we have the sense of wonder that He would love us that much that it might change our lives like it did Zacchaeus
 - c. Perhaps the most wondrous thing that we seem to overlook is that Jesus comes to us every week in the Eucharist
 - d. He asks to stay within us, leaves it to us to decide how we will welcome Him