

Alleluia, alleluia!

God loved the world so much, he gave his only Son, that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Lk 19:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*The Son of Man came to seek and to find that which was lost.*

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.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

30 OCTOBER 2022

## SALVATION HAS COME

'Could God really love me?' All too often Christians labour under the burden and misapprehension that God's love and forgiveness must be earned or merited. Aware of their frailty and need for God's mercy there is the fear that God could not love them given the mistakes they've made. Sometimes there is a sense that while God might be gracious and forgiving for others, this would be too much to hope for themselves. The book of Wisdom reminds us that while God patiently longs for our repentance we are always loved because our very existence is proof of God's love for us.

As Paul writes to the Thessalonians, he sets out to calm their fears about the return of the Lord at the end of time. He encourages them with the knowledge that he always prays that they will become worthy of the call that they have received as Christians. Paul knew that none of us can ever earn our salvation, it is always God's free and loving gift. His concern was more that we would learn to respond generously and appropriately to the marvellous gift we have received.

Zacchaeus is a fine example of a generous response to the Lord's loving initiative. Experiencing Jesus' openness and love leads him to offer to give half his considerable wealth to the poor. This meeting with a known sinner provides Jesus with the opportunity to state the purpose of his life and mission - to seek out and save what was lost.

## FIRST READING

Wis 11:22-12:2

A reading from the book of Wisdom

*You have mercy on all things because you love everything that exists.*

In your sight, Lord, the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales, like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground.

Yet you are merciful to all, because you can do all things

and overlook men's sins so that they can repent.

Yes, you love all that exists, you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it.

And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist,

how be conserved if not called forth by you?

You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life,

you whose imperishable spirit is in all.

Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend,

you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned,

so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord.

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESP PSALM

Ps 144:1-2, 8-11, 13-14. R. cf. v. 1

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

1. I will give you glory, O God my King, / I will bless your name for ever. / I will bless you day after day / and praise your name for ever. **R.**

2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion, / slow to anger, abounding in love. / How good is the Lord to all, / compassionate to all his creatures. **R.**



3. All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord, / and your friends shall repeat their blessing. / They shall speak of the glory of your reign / and declare your might, O God. **R.**

4. The Lord is faithful in all his words / and loving in all his deeds. / The Lord supports all who fall / and raises all who are bowed down. **R.**

## SECOND READING

2 Thess 1:11-2:2

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

*The name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in you and you in him.*

We pray continually that our God will make you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil all your desires for goodness and complete all that you have been doing through faith; because in this way the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To turn now, brothers, to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we shall all be gathered round him: please do not get excited too soon or alarmed by any prediction or rumour or any letter claiming to come from us, implying that the Day of the Lord has already arrived.

■ The word of the Lord.