

Homily for 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

“This day...this day...” God made this day for you...something I never tire of reminding a couple on their wedding day. “This day...this day...” The day of our birth, of our entrance into the world is one we celebrate every year. “This day...this day...” means hope. “This day...” means realized dreams. “This day...” is special, is unique, is a life-long gift.

And Luke knows exactly what “this day...” means. Eleven times St. Luke will use the phrase “this day”... “This day is born to you a saviour...” “This day the scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” “This day you will be with me in paradise.” “This day” for Luke is the proclamation of hope, of victory, of the reign of God, of the presence of God.

“This day” is the heart of today’s Gospel. For on “this day” the life of Zacchaeus is changed forever. On “this day” Zacchaes, a sinner, a man who exploited other is blessed with the gift of salvation. On “this day” God touches the heart of Zacchaeus and fills him with the light of His presence. And Zacchaeus was ready and waiting. He didn’t miss the moment. Instead, the moment became his greatest blessing.

“This day” is each day of our lives. For “this day” Jesus affirms God’s love for us and for all that God has created. Love, not loathing, is God’s manner of dealing with us. Mercy and forgiveness are the ways of God, who overlooks sin and allows time for repentance and for returning to the truth. “This day,” Christ reminds us that He is the guest who wishes to come and dine with us...to live in our hearts and to bring us new life.

On this first Sunday of November as we celebrate “this day” we unite ourselves in prayer to those who journey home to God. This day we pray for those whom we have held so dear to our hearts and who are no longer with us. This day we wrap our hearts around the souls of the just who have touched our lives and helped make us who we are today.

And on “this day” we pray that we may grasp the great gift of God’s love so that at the end of our own life journey we may be one with those who have died and for whom we pray on “this day.”