

HOMILY SUNDAY 31-C* (Homily 02)

“Children of Abraham”

(Wisdom 11:23-12:2; Psalm 145; 2 Thes 1:11-2:2; Luke 19:1-10)

What would a perfect parent look like? Some of those qualities might be patient yet firm; understanding and forgiving; caring yet able to discipline; protective yet respectful of personal freedom. In Jesus, God is a perfect parent, overlooking our sins so that we may repent.

Pray for repentant faith; the faith of Zaccheus, son of Abraham

In the first reading God is portrayed as the perfect parent, a God who loves all things. God cares for all of creation and has put God’s spirit in all things. God disciplines us as does a wise parent. God corrects little by little those who trespass, so they can repent, be free from their sins and put their trust in God. The author states clearly that God overlooks our sins so that we may repent. We see here a tender, compassionate, patient loving parent-God who wants only what is best for God’s creation and God’s creatures.

In the Gospel today, we see that Jesus fulfils that first reading. Jesus is God’s love and caring in the flesh. By looking up to Zaccheus and inviting himself to his house, he is overlooking his sins, that Zaccheus may repent, and repent he does. Zaccheus has an inner desire for more. He is open, humble, runs, climbs and repents in the warmth of Jesus’ acceptance and forgiveness.

Zaccheus experiences salvation, new life in Christ already and is reconciled with God, others, himself and all of creation. In Jesus with Zaccheus, God sought out the needy, the poor and the lost.

The question that arises for us is, can we see how we are needy, poor and lost? Can we run with faith to see Jesus as did Zaccheus, climb down from our trees of self-righteousness, repent of our sins and failings and make amends for them as he did? Jesus is passing through our lives at this moment. Can we *carpe diem*, seize the moment and repent? Then we too will be sons and daughters of Abraham, as was Zaccheus.

The scribes and Pharisees applied that title, sons of Abraham, to themselves, but their false pride and lack of self awareness prevented them from receiving the salvation offered by Jesus. May we be more humble and pray for that humble faith of Zaccheus, so that we too might already experience the salvation of God.

Here is some advice to parents from a child that fits in with today's readings:

1. My hands are small. Please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture or throw a ball.
2. My eyes have not seen the world as yours have. Please let me explore it at my own level without unnecessary restrictions.
3. The housework will always be there but I will be little only for a short time. Please take time to explain about this wonderful world.
4. My feelings are tender. Please be sensitive to my needs. Treat me as you would like to be treated.
5. I am a special gift from God. Treasure me as God intended, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by and disciplining me in a loving manner.
6. I need your encouragement to grow, so go easy on the criticism. Try to correct my behavior without criticizing me as a person.
7. Give me freedom to make decisions. Permit me to fail so I can learn from my mistakes, then I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires of me as an adult.
8. Don't do jobs over that I have done. This makes me feel that my efforts don't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard but please don't compare me with my brother or sister.
9. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from parents, just as parents need to get away occasionally. This is also a great way to show us kids that your marriage is special.
10. Please set a good example by taking me to Sunday School and church regularly. I enjoy learning about God.

In this Eucharist that we celebrate now, Jesus is passing through our lives again, by Word and Sacrament. How will we respond?

So as we celebrate today, let us respond to the love of our caring parent-God. Let us pray for the faith of Zaccheus, a son of Abraham, repent of any negative ways so that we too can not only see but also experience the salvation that Jesus brought to the world.