

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH HOMILY FOR THE 31st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 3rd NOVEMBER 2013

Wisdom 11.22-12.2; 2 Thess 1.11-2.2; Luke 19.1-10

Our God really is a great Papa. You know, when my children do something wrong I know I'm too quick to point it out. Straight away I know I've messed up and made things worse! One day I'll learn, I'll get some wisdom and patience and change my attitude.

As we heard in the reading from Wisdom, God overlooks men's sins SO THEY CAN REPENT. Little by little he admonishes us – He may point out through others or in our conscience things we should do differently or He may allow us to suffer the consequences of our choices until we wake up. And the result is that we may abstain from evil and trust in the Lord.

Now to trust in the Lord it helps if we have heard about him. In our Gospel today Luke tells us about Zacchaeus. Quite an unpopular man, certainly classed by most as a sinner... He didn't KNOW Jesus but he had heard about him. Zacchaeus is so keen, presumably because of what he's heard, that he climbs a tree to be able to see Jesus. Now, it's no co-incidence that Jesus stops, looks up and says "I must stay at your house tonight". The Holy Spirit had been at work, preparing for this meeting.

How amazing, of all the people present at that very moment, God (Jesus) came to save a rich man. Everyone else was judging Zacchaeus but instead of punishing or criticising him God comes into his home (Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof...).

As in the first reading, God overlooked his sins, to give Zacchaeus a chance to change. Jesus knew that this personal encounter was going to have an effect.

There are a few points I'd like to highlight here.

Zacchaeus had heard lots about Jesus, but didn't yet know him. So he put himself into a position whereby he would see Jesus.

Loads of people today have heard a little about Jesus, but maybe not enough to interest them sufficiently to want to meet him. So we need to create that interest so they want to meet him. And do this without judgement.

Jesus responds to Zacchaeus – Jesus always responds – and went to his house for a meal. Jesus responds to us – we can share a meal with Jesus every day if we choose.

The personal encounter with Jesus changed Zacchaeus, he made up for all his wrong dealings and the direction of his life was dramatically affected for the better.

Have we allowed ourselves to have a **personal encounter** with Jesus? This is challenging because if we have, it will show in how we behave.

Remember, the Church exists to tell the world about our Lord, Jesus Christ. That's why it grew and continues to grow in many parts of the world. Yet, I believe we have largely lost sight of this key purpose. We need to wake up and share this treasure.

Rev Jonathan de Kretser