

OCTOBER 30, 2016



THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



WISDOM 11:22–12:2

PSALM 145:1–2, 8–9, 10–11, 13, 14

2 THESSALONIANS 1:11–2:2

LUKE 19:1–10

REFLECTION

Today's readings reveal a God who pursues us. God "has come to seek and to save what was lost." In Luke's account of the Gospel, Jesus invites himself into the home of a sinner, Zacchaeus. This made those who were nearby grumble because it was well-known that Zacchaeus was a sinner. What it must have felt like to be sought out by Jesus! It caused Zacchaeus to have a profound change in disposition—enough to make him want to give half of his possessions to the poor. Could it be that Zacchaeus finally felt the unconditional love of God?

ACTION

The Lord is a lover of souls! Let's spend some time thinking about God's tenderness, compassion, and kindness. God doesn't just tolerate me, or find me annoying, or brush me off when I wander away. God seeks me out, has placed his spirit in me, and loves me just as I am! God's love for us is mentioned so often in the Bible and in church that sometimes we tune out what it really means to be loved by God. But it's so important for us to "get it" because love is at the very heart of who God is and how he shares life with us. It's easy to forget what it really means to be loved without any strings attached. God's love is unconditional!

Try holding your hands out in front of you, cupped together, and imagine you are holding a baby bird in the palm of your hands. If you hold too tightly you might harm her delicate wings. But, if you don't hold tightly enough she will fall to the ground. With enough time and gentle support, she will fly when ready. Now imagine that it's you who is the bird in the palm of God's hands. Keep this image in mind as you interact with others this week. After all, every one of us is fragile in one way or another. We all need gentle, loving support. Mirror the love of God as you embrace your own need for God's love. Secure in God's embrace, we, like Zacchaeus can be transformed, too.



JOURNALING QUESTIONS



- Have you ever felt unconditionally loved? In other words, have you ever experienced being loved no matter what? How did it make you feel?
- How can I allow myself to accept the love that God wants to give me?