

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost 24 Jesus in Jericho: Zacchaeus Luke 19:1-10

This incident is a Lukan masterpiece. With an economy of words he describes a scene that ends with a wonderful pronouncement. Zacchaeus must have been a notorious tax collector, and Jesus comes looking for him. We are told that Zacchaeus was a short man, hampered from seeing Jesus because of his height amidst the crowd. So he climbs up a Sycamore tree in order to see Jesus as he passes beneath him. The recognition moment in the story comes when Jesus stops and looks up at Zacchaeus. It was no doubt a searching look, but different to the Lord's look of piercing hurt that he directs at Peter on his way to his trial. We are not told of any preliminary words, but rather the first words of Jesus to Zacchaeus are an imperative: "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus instantly responds to this command. The little shyster will have the Master of the world as his guest! What an opportunity to talk at first hand with the bearer of such wisdom. We see Jesus' wisdom clearly displayed in his reported teachings.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner". Zacchaeus offers to give half of his possessions to the poor, and to give fourfold restitution where he may have cheated someone. He had certainly cheated someone! The "if" is hardly necessary. The charge of being a "sinner" has some dark dealings behind it. The offer is very generous, especially from someone who is used to filching money from people, whether legally or otherwise.

Jesus does not refer to this offer in his response. Instead, a pronouncement is made. It is drawn from the encounter with this unlikely 'disciple', Zacchaeus. "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 came to seek and to save what was lost'" (Luke 19:9-10). "This man, too, is a son of Abraham" signals courtesies that Jesus pays to the founder of the race and his descendants. But this courtesy is strained when his own people reject him rather than seeking him out as Zacchaeus had done.

This is another demonstration of Jesus' capacity to engage people who were reviled by his society. The meeting with Zacchaeus is an example taken from the extremities of social discourse in Israel. It is not sufficient to describe Zacchaeus as a "marginal" person in Israel. He had money, and that would have given him some influence. But any standing that he had was acquired with tainted money, and therefore lacking genuine esteem. He was a social outcast like those of his kind. But the Saviour of the world comes looking for him. Sometimes Jesus comes looking for us, but we hesitate, unable for a moment to comprehend what is being offered. Zacchaeus sees where Jesus is going and runs ahead to scale the sycamore tree. He really wants to have a good look at this prophet from Galilee! So do we, but Zacchaeus runs ahead of us to meet the historical Jesus.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Nov. 5 (Wednesday).

- Bible Study, 10:00am

Nov. 6 (Thursday).

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

[7:30 service] - Job 19:23-27a;
Psalm 17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5
Luke 20:27,34-38.

[9:30 service] - Isaiah 2:1-4
Ephesians 6:10-18; John 15:12-17

COMING UP:

November 10.

- Holy Eucharist (7:30am)
- Remembrance Sunday (9:30 service)

November 17.

- Holy Eucharist (7:30am)
- NCCP Sunday (9:30 service)

November 24. Christ the King.

- Stewardship Sunday (7:30 & 9:30)
- Joint Ecumenical Thanksgiving service @ Union Church Manila, 6:30pm.

Vestry Notes:

Vestry voted to support 10 students at Holy Spirit School in Taguig and welcomed the idea of Mrs. Florence Aben, the new head-of-school coming to address the congregation. Support was also continued for 11 students at Payong on the basis of overall merit. This underlines our commitment to outreach, though an integrated policy for further outreach has been proposed.

Bishop Arthur Jones



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

Christmas is fast approaching and with that comes our Annual Christmas Pageant. Children & teens are welcome to participate. A sign up form is posted on the board by the Parish Office. Rehearsals will start on **November 16** and every weekend thereafter until 24th December.