



### **Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 19: 1-10.**

*At that time Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."*

### **Luke 19:1-10**

#### **Introductory Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you are the Alpha and the Omega. You have given me life and offer me eternal life with you. You deserve my honor, gratitude and love, and yet you never impose yourself upon me. Thank you for respecting my freedom so that I can offer myself to you. All that I have is yours; I return it to you.

#### **Petition:**

Lord, increase my faith.

#### **1. Zacchaeus up a Tree:**

Yesterday and today's Gospel passages speak eloquently of the need to encounter Christ at all costs. The blind man we read about yesterday would not stop shouting until he was brought to the Lord. Today a short and very unpopular man named Zacchaeus runs back and forth among the crowd until finally, in his determination to encounter Christ, he breaks all protocol and scrambles up a tree. Jesus wastes no time in entering

decisively this tax collector's life and transforming it. This resembles our own encounter with Christ. At times different obstacles stand in our way and prevent us from seeing Our Lord and his action in our lives. Above all we lack determination. How easy it is to craft excuses: I am just too short, Maybe Jesus is too busy, I am just a sinner. If we really want Our Lord to stay at our house, he will, but there may be trees that we need to climb first.

## **2. Welcoming Jesus:**

Few people ever welcomed Jesus with the joy and exuberance as did this little man. He came down from the tree, gave half of his wealth to the poor, and promised to restore any fraudulent transactions four times over. Zacchaeus has truly been like that merchant in search of fine pearls (see Matthew 13:45-46). He is willing to sell all he has to buy the pearl of great price: friendship and intimacy with the Lord. How many times has Jesus looked up at us and asked us to remain with him? How many times have we had the immense grace of receiving the King of kings into our hearts in the Blessed Eucharist? Do we offer merely a corner of our hearts for him or do we reserve the presidential suite? How pure do we maintain our souls for our Guest?

## **3. Of Sinners and Saints:**

What makes someone a saint and someone else a sinner? Certainly it is not the grumbling of the jealous crowd who are unwilling to climb up the tree to see Jesus yet are quick to criticize anyone who does. In fact, everyone is a sinner. St. Paul writes, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost (1 Timothy 1:15). Yet St. Paul, Zacchaeus, you and I all go from being sinners to saints when we encounter Christ and are faithful to his friendship. Salvation came to Zacchaeus house when Jesus entered it, and salvation comes to us through the graces received at baptism, renewed in the Sacrament of Penance, and nurtured in the Eucharist.

## **Conversation with Christ:**

Jesus, help me to be willing to do whatever it takes to grow in a deeper friendship with you. Don't allow me to worry about the murmurings of the crowd, but only to listen to your voice and respond to it with generosity.

## **Resolution:**

I will make a point to go to confession at the next possible opportunity asking Jesus to forgive me my sins and to help me to turn from being a sinner into being a saint. I will make it a real encounter with Jesus.