**ORDINARY TIME 31 C Lectionary Catechesis**

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**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| Jesus approaches and moves through the ancient city of Jericho. Here the road turns up to Jerusalem. The road is short and steep. His first stop will be the Mount of Olives to prepare for his entry. In Jericho, Jesus teaches about his coming passion and death, heals a blind man, meets Zacchaeus, short in stature, and tells a parable about committed discipleship. The themes of Luke 19 seem to be tied together by this important teaching. Based on the choice of the Wisdom reading paired with the Gospel, the teaching is on humility. The road to Jerusalem leads to the cross; in Luke’s gospel in a few Sundays we will be at the cross. For the end of this liturgical year, the Church chooses for the Solemnity of the Christ the Kind, the story of the repentant their on the cross beside Jesus. Matthew tells us nothing of this incident, Mark relates only that Jesus was crucified between “two revolutionaries”, Luke calls them criminals and tells about the whole conversation, and John merely says “two others”, nothing more. |

**FIRST READING: Wisdom 11, 22 – 12, 2**

The Book of Wisdom is one of the Catholic books of the Old Testament. This reading is a reflection on the grandeur of God’s mercy in light of the smallness of our human condition. Its inclusivity is striking for the scope of God’s mercy which exceeds what we ourselves would do. This inclusivity emerged in Hellenistic culture as a value of cosmopolitanism. “O Lord and lover of souls” is not just a devotional thought, but a divine reality, and so we too as Church must also be lovers of souls. This is not merely or only those souls we would esteem and judge already saved. “Your imperishable spirit is in all things” sounds a bit panentheistic, in other words a larger cosmology that we are usually prepared to grant.

**Vs 23: CCC 269** We are reminded in the Creed that God is almighty and can do everything.

**Vss 24-26: CCC 301** The Catechism reminds us of the breath and scope of God’s love as absolute and for all things, because he created them. God loathes no one or no thing.

**Vs 24: CCC 373** The Catechism connects God’s stewardship with our own (Genesis 1, 28). In other words our “dominion” over the earth is a stewardship out of love, responsibility, and carefulness.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why has “dominion over the earth” been so misinterpreted over the millennia?  What did you learn about the human place in all of creation? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | In what way do you exercise good stewardship over what is entrusted to you?  What does “overlooking sin for the sake of repentance” mean to you in daily life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How can you show this week the power of God in your life to others?  Share your appreciation for the awe- some and creative acts of God in your life. |
| **WORSHIP** | What part of our Church architecture leads us to the grandeur of God?  Compare and contrast the creative acts of God with our own human creations. |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 145, 1-2. 8-9.10.11.13. 14**

This psalm brings together the themes of the Wisdom reading with the Gospel in a hymn of praise.

“God created the world according to his wisdom.” While we may not understand much of it or even wish parts of the world were otherwise, we believe in God’s will and wisdom for all that exists. Among the final psalms, praise is the main point. The psalmist heaps up a list, not so much of God’s attributes, of reasons why God is praised. The psalmist puts all these in the form of verb, the action words, to stress the pervading activity of God everywhere.

**Vs 9: CCC 295, 342** “God created the world according to his wisdom.” While we may not understand much of it or even wish parts of the world were otherwise, we believe in God’s will and wisdom for all that exists.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Reflect on the opening of the Creed about God the Father.  What are the hallmark qualities of God named in this psalm?  Why does the image of God and the way we speak of God, in light of this psalm, so often portray God as mean, harsh, and a dominating authoritarian? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | f we are to imitate Jesus, when can a person be “slow to anger” and “abounding in mercy?”  How does God’s will rule in your life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Do you extol God in your family, neighborhood, parish, and work community ?  What are the qualities of a good public dialogue or discourse on religion and faith for our society? |
| **WORSHIP** | Vs 2 speaks of blessing God every day. What does that mean for you?  What do you give thanks to God for this very day? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: II Thessalonians 1, 11-2, 2**

St. Paul encourages us to remain constant in our faith in committed discipleship, despite the distractions, false teachings, and chaos surrounding us in the modern world. Our text has two parts: first the end of the introductory part of the letter, an extension of the greeting, as a prayer for Timothy in his overseeing ministry. Second the author gives a teaching on second coming of Christ. He warns against any sort of apocalypticism. The disciple must be steadfast and fearless. Already hinted at here is the early circulation of all sorts of alternative “gospels” in some way varying from the original kerygma. Apocalyptic and neo-gnostic Christian variants are rampant today as people pick and choose to create their own versions of Christianity.

**Vs 11: CCC 2636** Intercessory prayer is a form of Church being a community of believers and sharing one another’s burdens. Intercessory prayers are offered “for every good purpose and every effort of the faith.”

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Name the things that “shake us out of our minds or alarm us” about the com- ing of Christ and the end of the world.  What does our faith and this letter of St Paul teach you about the end of the world? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What can you do to live without being disturbed by the apocalypticism in our culture?  What do we do as disciples to avoid holding on to a spirit of “alarm” in our lives? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How do you respond when someone tells you they know when the world is going to end?  What can you do to practice “committed discipleship” in your home? |
| **WORSHIP** | What is the role of intercessory prayer in Sunday worship? In other words, name all the times you can remember that the Church is interceding during the Mass.  Why is praying for personally selfish things not a recommended form of wor- ship? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 19, 1-10 Jesus encounters Zacchaeus in Jericho**

Jesus not only sees Zacchaeus up in the sycamore, but invites himself to his home. Zacchaeus, his shortness making him an object of ridicule and his corrupt status as tax collector making him an object of scorn and fear, is forgiven by his faith in Jesus. Jesus shows his own humility, just as Zacchaeus does in his own way, and all the people are challenged in their preconceived notions of religious righteousness. Immediately following is the parable of the ten gold coins, and then Jesus approaches Jerusalem. The connection between the Zacchaeus encounter and this parable is Jesus’ sayings about the small becoming great. And please don’t tell short people jokes; it’s inappropriate.

**Vss 1-10: CCC 2712** The Catechism speaks of the whole Zacchaeus incident in the section on contemplative prayer. It urges us “to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more.” Contemplative prayer, in the actions of Zacchaeus, is a poor and humble surrender to God.

**Vs 8: CCC 549, 2412** The encounter with Jesus frees us from the shackles of sin, our former life style that separates us from God and community. The Seventh Commandment necessarily requires “reparation for injustice.” This is an important social justice teaching of the Church enacted by Zacchaeus.

V**s 9: CCC 1443** In the section on the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, the Church reminds us that Jesus not only forgives sins but restores the sinner to communion. The Church is responsible for welcoming the person back, not for making negative judgments or murmuring, as the crowd does about Zacchaeus.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you learn about the sacrament of penance and reconciliation from this gospel story?  How does our faith save us? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you need (or we as whole society and church) to make reparation for?  What does it do to you to pay attention and really see the “shattered world” (John Paul II’s words) around you?  In what way are we “short of stature” when it comes to faith? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Bullying is a cultural phenomena, drawing a lot of needed attention. Zacchaeus is a bully (tax collector) and being bullied (the crowd murmuring against him). Share a time when you’ve stopped a bullying incident.  How does God’s love invite you “by loving even more”? |
| **WORSHIP** | What obstacles do we have to overcome (like shortness of stature) in order to see Jesus?  Reflect on the scope and breath of communion as community in your life with Jesus. |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 32 C: II Maccabees 7, 1-2. 5-14; Ps 17; II Thessalonians 2, 16-3,5; Luke 20, 27-38**