

Reflection Questions

- How would you describe your understanding of God while you were still active in your addictions, compulsions, or unhealthy attachments?
- What changed or happened that allowed the love of God to transform you?
 - What kind of interior work is He currently helping you with?
- What promises are coming true in your life?

Monthly Catholic in Recovery Newsletter

*Visit catholicinrecovery.com to sign up
and join our online community*

- Monthly testimony from CIR participants
- New meeting announcements
- Resources and articles overlapping the 12 steps and the sacraments
- Be a part of our global mission

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Wisdom 11:22-12:2

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13, 14

2nd Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time



*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might have
eternal life.*

While our Sunday Mass readings this week do not include John 3:16, the essence of this scripture passage is woven into the theme of the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time. God—the Creator of all things—loved the universe and each one of us into existence. The author of the Book of Wisdom speaks poetically to the Lord in this week's First Reading:

*But you have mercy on all, because you can do all
things;
and you overlook people's sins that they may repent.
For you love all things that are
and loathe nothing that you have made;
for what you hated, you would not have fashioned.
And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it;
or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?
But you spare all things, because they are yours,
O Lord and lover of souls,
for your imperishable spirit is in all things!*

As we fashion our understanding of God through the lens of our faith, this is very good news! Those of us that have experienced the darkness of active addiction, unchecked compulsions, and unhealthy attachments can testify to the need for a complete psychic change. This change does not happen on our own, and it demands willingness to trust that God will catch us if we throw ourselves face-first into recovery.

Attitudes of shame may need to be evaluated as well. We have a tendency to hold tightly to memories of our own shortcomings and patterns of unworthiness. It might take us a while to shift from the idea that God is looking to punish us to the sentiment of gratitude we hear in the Book of Wisdom. An example of quick conversion can be found in this week's Gospel Reading where a wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus was attempting to get a more intimate view of our Lord:

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 all 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."

"No person likes to admit he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 30), which is why the first movement into the spiritual solution of recovery is to recognize that there is a problem. We went to great lengths to maintain our addictive and compulsive behavior. Therefore, climbing a tree in the middle of a crowd to get a better view of Jesus or seeking a recovery fellowship for a way out proclaims our willingness.

What seems to be an important step in the process of this tax collector's recovery and conversion is Step 9 —*making direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others*. As a result of our addictions and compulsions, we often owe a financial amends and are encouraged not to dodge our creditors. Zacchaeus meets these requirements and then some.

Zacchaeus experiences the same promises we hear from recovery literature. Before he is half way through, the newly reformed tax collector comes "to know a new freedom and a new happiness" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 83).

Jesus remarks, "Today salvation has come to this house." Zacchaeus is "a son of Abraham" again, that is, a member of his community in good standing. What the adventure of Zacchaeus tells us about God is the core of the Gospels or *the good news*: "The Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost."