

2019.11.03 Homily by Fr. Gabor

Today's readings are so fantastic, because they remind me of the unimaginable love of God our Heavenly Father.

The book of Wisdom reminds you how little we are in the presence of Almighty Father who created the entire universe, and yet you are also so important and loved by the Father that He gives up His life for you when Jesus dies on the cross. He is a lover of every tiny little life that He created. We have a generous, mighty, mercifully loving Father. He is so patient that only little by little, in accord with your ability He corrects you, so that you might come back to trust Him and love Him.

The psalmist sings about how faithfully and lovingly our heavenly Father to each one of us, His tiny little creatures. He as a committed Parent supports you when you fall, and raises you when you humble yourself. Therefore He should always be your first priority; you should always seek Him first, to know Him and love Him, and to praise and thank Him.

St. Paul in the second reading tells you that your desire for goodness and love should come not merely out of your inclination to portray a good image about yourself before others, but first of all from your belief that God wants to make you a good and loving person, like himself. He is the only one who can make you truly good and loving, because He himself is the only single source of real and true goodness and love. Filled with God's goodness and love you must turn them into good and loving actions and words, and your divinely inspired, not merely self-motivated, goodness and love for others will bring the best out of those who are in spiritual darkness or sinful bondages.

This is what we witness in the Gospel reading. Jesus brings the best out of a sinner, Zacchaeus, who was a cheat. How? He first of all calls Zacchaeus by name. The national celebrity, the famous and admired teacher, prophet, miracle worker knows your name! Wow! You matter to Him! The God of Israel knows you by your name, in other words, every single one of you is important enough for Him to know your name. And if that is not enough He wants to come and visit you in your home. You are valuable enough in His eyes to enter your home and spend time with you. Jesus tells Zacchaeus: 'I must stay in your house today', not just pop in, but stay for the rest of the day. Recently I was most happy when my best friend told me that I would

like to come and stay in your home for a few hours, because I need some quiet space. I was really looking forward to it and it made my day. I hope he will do it again!

Another very important thing happens in this story. Jesus by showing respect and interest in Zacchaeus starts to bring the best out of Zacchaeus. Jesus doesn't judge him, although He could for being a cheat, but simply respects Him and tells Him that He is all worthy to visit him. This tiny little creature in this vast universe, and also literally little man, he is worthy, he is still valuable, although He doesn't deserve it; and Zacchaeus gets this most important message of our loving Father, and touched in his heart he is overjoyed. He has found what his heart always looked for. Unconditional love and not money. He is freed from his bondage to greed, lies and cheating. By Jesus' unconditional love He experiences what matters most in life, so he is now ready to give love unconditionally, and he suddenly becomes like Jesus, an overgenerous giver: 'I will give half my property to the poor...' he says. Wow, what a conversion! How powerful God's love is! Which one of you would be as generous as that?

To me personally it is really interesting that this Gospel story comes up at this time, because recently I heard many times in my heart the Holy Spirit telling me: do not judge others, but simply love them as the Father does, and so you will bring the best out of them! So thank you Father for confirming this message and for encouraging all of us through today's Gospel reading to do the same!