

31st Sunday of Ordinary Time “Guess Who is Coming for Dinner”

Bishop Frank Schuster

Zacchaeus’ wife must have been furious! Imagine, for a moment, that your spouse brought the President of the United States home one evening to stay for the night. You would probably want at least a month’s notice. If a VIP was coming over to your house, you would want time to clean the house up and get a good feast prepared. In the Gospel, we have the Son of God dropping in on Zacchaeus’ home at a moment’s notice. There was no time to clean or do anything to prepare. Notice that Jesus didn’t even ask Zacchaeus if it would be OK to stay at his place. Jesus says simply, “Zacchaeus come down from that tree quickly for today I must stay at your house”.

That is simply how it is with God. Unlike other VIPs, Jesus in his divinity is the Master of all households. Like our first reading from Wisdom, “Before the Lord the whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of dew come down from the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook people’s sins that they may repent.” Zacchaeus was given this grace. The Lord invited himself over to dinner, much to the chagrin of others standing around, and Zacchaeus repented of all his wrong doings and promised to make amends with his neighbors.

In our spiritual journey, it seems to me that Jesus at times simply invites himself into the households of our hearts. He doesn’t ask for permission. Rarely does he give us much of a moment’s notice. Jesus invites himself into the household of our hearts. Like any household caught off guard, the household of the human heart has some clutter, some corners that need dusting, and some closets that need to be cleaned. Jesus invites himself in at a moment’s notice to offer his grace and his healing presence. When Jesus arrives to the house of our human heart, all we can do is say “Lord, this is my house such as it is”. If we let him in, the Lord will respond with love, forgiveness, and provide the coaching we need to be better disciples. When Jesus invites himself into the house of the human heart, we are shocked to discover that Jesus himself will pick up a broom to help us with the chores.

My friends, this weekend the Lord invites himself into the house of our hearts. The invitation is to welcome the Lord with open arms like Zacchaeus. What does that look like for you? There are many ways we can welcome the Lord into our households, by not just loving God and loving neighbor, but going out of our way to do so. What does that look like this week? We can also be more intentional with our mealtime and bedtime prayers, eating together as family, honoring the Sabbath together, making Sunday mass a priority no matter what football game is on TV. There are many ways in which we can welcome the Lord into the household of the human heart each and every day.

And so, my friends, our hearts now turn to the Eucharist. Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist, body, blood, soul, and divinity. When we eat the body of Christ and drink his blood, we are welcoming the Lord into the house of the human heart. We are then given an invitation, to carry Christ with us into the world. The good news is, no matter

how far we may feel like we have fallen, our loving and gracious God demands to pay our household a visit. The invitation this weekend is to open wide the doors to Christ!