



*"Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Listen! I will give half my belongings to the poor; and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much.' "*

Luke 19:8

# The Sunday of Zacchaeus

Father Joseph Kapusnak

*"Today salvation has come to this house for... the Son of Man has come to search out and to save what was lost."*

Luke 19:1-10

The Sunday of Zacchaeus reminds us that we will soon be entering the time of the Holy Great Fast which in turn prepares us for the passion and death of Jesus through which our salvation is secured and promised in the Holy Resurrection.

Before we enter the Great Forty-Days, we already get a glimpse of the Feast of feasts—Pascha as we hear the words of our Lord to Zacchaeus: "Today salvation has come to this house...." Salvation is not just a word but rather a person—the Person of Jesus Christ! Isn't it a feeling of joy for us to realize that Jesus comes to be the guest of one of us? Zacchaeus, a public swindler, welcomed Him with great joy. And yet, today's holy gospel account tells us that when Jesus was asked to stay with Zacchaeus, everyone began to murmur, because He was entering the house of a known sinner, a publican—a puppet tax collector for the Roman occupation forces in Israel.

Isn't it a pity that we seem to be kinder to people in their times of adversity than in their times of joy? The twins of envy and jealousy hidden within us try to prevent us from rejoicing in the good fortunes of neighbors. We ourselves have received many blessings, but often we would deny the same to others. We see this same attitude on the part of the Pharisees and scribes as described in the holy gospels.

The gospel lessons of the pre-greatfast Sundays give us the guidelines to complete the greatfast journey successfully. The desire to see Jesus is one of the key attitudes that we must take along on our journey to Pascha. Obviously the desire of Zacchaeus to see the Lord was so great that he gave no thought to the people around him as they tried to prevent him in his quest. Desire is our lesson for this first pre-greatfast Sunday. This is the first step toward repentance.

The next four Sundays of the pre-greatfast season will also give us lessons and attitudes as conveyed through the holy epistles and gospels which will help us along the way. Envy and jealousy are not the vehicles of travel for us. But rejoicing in the Lord for the abundance of His blessings is an excellent means to reach the goal. Jesus' words directed towards Zacchaeus are meant for all of us: "Today salvation has come to this house...." Let us all prepare to accept Christ as our salvation in the days to come.

**SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 19:1-10**