



### **SUNDAY REFLECTION**

When Zacchaeus went rushing around looking for a good vantage point to see Jesus, what was happening? What made this small, unpopular figure go to such lengths to see Jesus? Was he perched precariously in the tree simply out of curiosity? Or was he there for something more? Had the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth already made such an impression on him that he was prepared to brave the taunts from the crowds and expose himself to ridicule? He was surely about much more than catching a glimpse of Jesus. He must have already recognized something of what Jesus was about.

And when Jesus sees him, He not only takes notice of him but invites him to hasten down to join Him, for he must share table with Him 'today'. An overjoyed Zacchaeus had already grasped something of Jesus' message. He was already prepared to re-order his life in a radical way, and now his 'Lord', as he calls Him, shares table and breaks bread with him. Jesus' words had clearly found fertile soil here – they had not returned empty from the heart of this hard-

hearted tax-collector. The story begins with a wealthy tax-collector seeking to see Jesus 'who He was' and ends with the Son of Man seeking to save the lost – two quests come to fruition here.

It should also be noted how starkly Luke shows us the attitude of Jesus to the rich and their need for conversion. Today's Gospel is the third panel in a kind of triptych. The first is an account of a rich ruler who remains blinded by his riches despite his encounter with Jesus, the center panel being the literal cure of a blind man. In this context, the story of Zacchaeus tells of an enlightenment which leads to a commitment to do more than compensate for the injustices he has committed. The cure of the blind beggar is the key to understanding the story of Zacchaeus as a call to abandon the blindness of riches while others are poor.

**STEWARDSHIP:** We are called to be good stewards of our personal vocations. St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians is therefore our, too – "that our God may make us worthy of His calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith."

Archbishop Ullathorne

"The greatest thing for us is the perfection of our own soul; and the saints teach us that the perfection consists in doing our ordinary actions well."

## **READINGS THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY**

**10 NOV '19**

**2 Macc. 7:1-2, 9-14:** The story of the martyrdom of the seven Maccabean brothers and of their mother, tells of their absolute fidelity to the law of God and their firm belief in the resurrection.

**2 Thes. 2:16-3:5:** Paul reminds his readers that the faithful Lord will strengthen the Thessalonians and guard them, and he prays that the love of God may continue to grow among them.

**Lk. 20:27-38:** Sadducees put a trick problem to Jesus, hoping to make resurrection from the dead look ridiculous. He uses the Scriptures in an unexpected way to show that God is a God of the living.

Rabindranath Tagore

"Every child comes into the world with the message that God does not yet despair of man."

**INTRODUCTION & WELCOME:** I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to the parish and welcome Rev. Patricio (Pat) Diesta Alcantara. Fr. Alcantara has been assigned as the Parochial Vicar of Prince of Peace Catholic Church. On a temporary basis the Bishop has also instructed Fr. Alcantara to provide some assistance to us at St. Stephen during my transition back into full service of the parish. Father will be assisting with the celebration of

**some Masses as well as providing sick-call relief and additional duties as determined by Fr. Romeo Jazmin the Dean of this Deanery and myself.**

**This week Fr. Alcantara will be celebrating weekday Masses at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.**

**SAINT:** Having just celebrated All Saints Day, perhaps now would be an appropriate time to consider what the term saint actually means.

A saint is a person who is recognized officially by the Church as having attained an extraordinary degree of holiness while on earth and the beatific vision of the Trinity in heaven. Derived from the Latin *sanctus* (holy), the term has also been used to denote anyone of outstanding holiness and was also applied by St. Paul to Christians in general (Col. 1a:2; 2 Cor. 13:12; Eph. 1:1). Today, the Church applies the title of saint to those servants of God who have been declared officially to be in heaven; new saints in the Church are recognized only after a lengthy investigation called the Process of Canonization. Saints are first beatified and then canonized by the pope who makes an infallible declaration of their sanctity and so permits the many benefits of canonization to be bestowed upon the new saint. The central agency of the Church with authority to oversee the investigation of a candidate prior to beatification and canonization is the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

As Christ commanded, "So be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48), it is the object of all Christians to achieve holiness, and this goal is not reserved only for priest, nuns, and monks, but is for all people, regardless of their walks of life or personal states. The Church, especially in the modern era, has canonized many lay men and women, single and married, recognizing each as a superb example of the imitation of Christ and a model to be followed by all the faithful. Central to the remarkable life of a saint is not the performance of miracles or the achievement of marvelous deeds. It is, rather, the clear and undeniable reality of their sanctity. This fact more than any other is the foundation of their cause, the reason for their beatification and canonization, and the purpose of encouraging Catholics everywhere to follow their example.

Pope Benedict XIV (r. 1740-1758) proposed six characteristics of sanctity. First, the saint is willing to undertake even very difficult tasks in the name of God; second, the virtuous acts they perform are done in accordance with the age, condition, and state of the person; third, the acts are performed without hesitation or delay; fourth, enormous joy is found in the performance of virtuous acts, and also in the enduring of great suffering in the name of God's love; fifth, the saint is ever constant, never changing in the fulfillment of God's will, and he or she is as devout and holy one day as any other; and finally, the saint is a perfect example of all the virtues, even those that may seem incompatible with each other (e.g., humility and benevolence), while exemplifying the perfect fulfillment of the Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity) and the cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude).

For all of these reasons, the Church has long promoted the proper veneration of saints as a means of giving honor and recognition to them and to encourage all to follow their example.

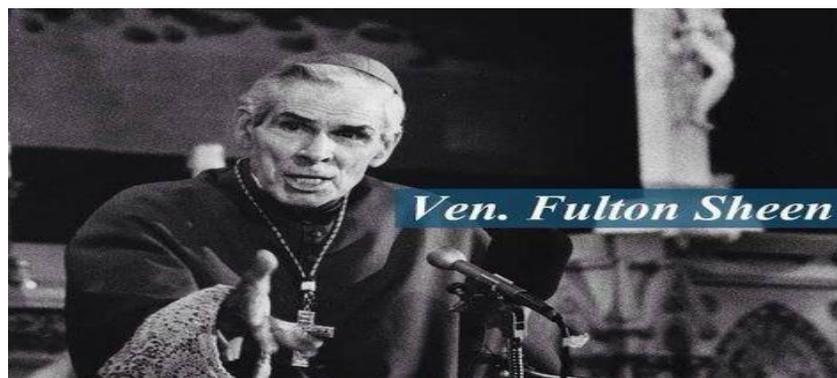
The correct form of veneration which is bestowed upon the saints is *dulia*, which is

differentiated from the heightened veneration given to the Virgin Mary (*hyperdulia*) and the special worship reserved exclusively for God (*latria*). It is not proper for Catholics to say that they worship saints (as they worship God), for that is reserved alone for the Lord. Instead, they give veneration, from the Latin *venerari*, meaning to regard with religious awe.

Praying to the saints is considered by the Church to be a good and proper activity that does not in any way detract from the honor and devotion that are owed to God. First, the saints are deserving of special recognition for their Christian perfection and extraordinary love for God. Second, as saints are the work of God, receiving their grace from Him, honor paid to the saints is honor given to God. The invocation of saints has been much misunderstood by the opponents of the Catholic faith, in particular the Protestant Reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. If, they charged, God was disposed to answer the prayers of the faithful without need for intercession, then addressing oneself to an intercessor is useless and even sinful because it takes away the rightful prayers which should be addressed to God. Such complaints ignore the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, by which it is taught that the saints are participants in the Mystical Body of Christ and are deeply concerned with the welfare of the Church Militant and the Church Suffering. Just as the living pray for souls in purgatory, so do the saints pray for them and the living on earth. Prayers to saints ask not for mercy or forgiveness for sins. They ask the saints, who have won their crowns of glory, to intercede on the behalf of the living before the Lord.

**SAINT OF THE WEEK      THEODORE TYRE (d. early 4<sup>th</sup> cent.)      9 Nov.**

Roman martyr, considered to be virtually identical with St. Theodore Stratelates (f. d. 7 Feb.). according to custom, he was a recruit (*tiro*) in the Roman army at Pontus, on the Black Sea. After refusing to participate in a pagan ceremony, he was brought before the tribune of the legion and the governor of the region. Freed temporarily, he immediately went out and set fire to the temple of Cybele near Amasea in Pontus. For this crime, he was burned to death in a furnace. Beyond the legend of his martyrdom, little is known with certainty of his death. Nevertheless, he was greatly venerated in the Eastern Church as one of the three "Soldier Saints," with George and Demetrios.



*Ven. Fulton Sheen*

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*Heaven is a city on a hill,  
hence we cannot coast into  
it; we have to climb.*