

Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time, 3rd November 2019

“Today salvation has come to this house.”

Zacchaeus was a senior tax collector. Such people were despised in their own communities. First of all, they were collaborators with the occupying forces of Rome. They made their living by collecting taxes from the local people in order to support the oppressive structure of imperial Rome. But there was more; they made themselves rich by adding a premium to what they had to deliver to the Romans in order to cover their own expensive lifestyle. If they were going to be unpopular in any case, they might as well do it in comfort. Clearly, Zacchaeus was not happy with his way of life. He saw something in Jesus that was different. He wanted to know what it was, and so he climbed a sycamore tree that was along the way Jesus would pass so that he could get a good view and maybe learn his secret.

He got more than he bargained for. Jesus not only saw him in the tree but called him down. Jesus did not join in the universal condemnation of tax collectors but on the contrary, went so far as to invite himself to the home of Zacchaeus. The reaction of the crowd was predictable. They complained about Jesus associating with such a man. The reaction of Zacchaeus, however, was different. The way Jesus accepted him, not condemning or criticising, helped Zacchaeus to see that he could change his life and do things differently. He was now ready to give back his ill-gotten gains and start afresh.

Calls to my mind the true story that the Columnist Scott Bennett shared with us, about a man whom he identifies only as “Michael.” Michael’s marriage was ending, he had no job, his father had died a month earlier, and his car had just been repossessed. One night, in desperate cry for help, Michael “Lifted his face to the stars.” Then the incredible thing happened! He said: “I felt I was one with... call it God, call it creation... I don’t know. I do know I felt a peace I have never known before, or since. A power and a purpose were revealed to me that night I cannot put into words. But I have never doubted again that life is precious and has a purpose.”

Many of us are dissatisfied with our way of life. Perhaps we are disappointed with the way things have turned out. Maybe we have made bad or wrong choices. There are things that make us wish that we could start again and do things differently. We might be very successful in our career. We might have a wonderful relationship with our spouse and family. Or maybe not. For all of us, there is a sense of incompleteness, something missing. We want something more. St Augustine summed it up in his Confessions, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.” In fact, this desire for something more, something better, is built into our basic make-up as human beings.

The point of today’s Gospel reading is to show us that the answer to our inner longings is not to acquire more things for ourselves but rather to build relationships of love and compassion with others who are on the same journey, with Jesus as our leader and guide. He brought salvation to Zacchaeus and his house. He did not condemn what he had been doing or even ask him to change.

Simply by inviting himself into his home, Jesus helped Zacchaeus to make new and better choices for his life. And for those who considered that they were already doing the right thing by ostracising the tax collector, Jesus invited them to broaden their vision of who God wanted to save: all the family of Abraham, especially those who were lost.

What about us today? Jesus offers us choices. Like Mother Teresa, he asks us, "What are you going to do?" Will you try to find fulfilment in the enjoyment of what this world has to offer in power, pleasure and possessions? Or will you join Jesus on the way of love and compassion in the family of his faithful disciples?

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Remembrance Sunday 10th November. Please note that the 11.00am Mass next Sunday will start at **11.15am** after the Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial has ended.

Monthly Teas and Coffees. There will be no teas and coffees after the 9.15am Mass next Sunday (the 2nd Sunday) but there will be coffees on **17th November** (3rd Sunday).

November List envelopes. You will find envelopes in the narthex for the names of your deceased family and friends for you to place in the box by the hymn book trolleys. During the month of November eight Masses will be offered for the repose of the souls of all those on the November List.

Sick and Retired Priests. Next weekend is the annual collection for sick and retired priests in the Diocese of Westminster. At present, 80 priests are receiving support from the fund after years of dedicated service to God and their parishioners. Most priests offer their resignation at 75, but many continue to serve in our schools, hospitals, hospices and parishes. By supporting the Sick & Retired Priests' Fund, you can help cover essential costs such as ensuring they have a suitable place to live, and regular visits from carers when they are sick. Best of all, you'll help give them peace of mind that in the event of an emergency, their needs will be met.

This is our chance to say thank you to our sick and retired priests who have given so much. You will find a donation envelope at the back of the church today. Please take one home, and bring it back next weekend with your donation. Please continue to pray for the wellbeing of all of our clergy: active, retired and ill. You can donate online at www.rcdow.org.uk/donations

Signing Primary School Forms. I will be signing Certificates of Catholic Practice on **Wednesday 20th November** at St Michael's School, 2.30-3.30pm and in the Presbytery 6.15 - 6.45pm. It would be a great help to me if you would come only at these times and not seek individual appointments.

Confirmation 2020. Canon Paschal Ryan, Episcopal Vicar for Ashford, will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to our young people on **Saturday 27th June 2020** at 2.30pm. Application details will be available shortly.

October Bucket. Thank you for your donations of £73.02 during October for Ashford Breast Cancer.

Fr Sidon Sagar FDP

Dates for your diary

November

Sunday 10th Remembrance Sunday Mass at 11.15am (not 11.00am)

Saturday 16th Antiques Fair, 10.00am – 3.00pm

Sunday 17th Teas and Coffees after 9.15am Mass (not 2nd Sunday)

Saturday 23rd De Paul Trust Jumble Sale, 10.00am

Offertory Collection. Last week's collection was £1,682.98- Envelopes £604.60; Bankers Orders £600.00 (weekly average); Loose Plate £478.38

The Bucket Collection in November is for Crossroads Care Surrey, *providing vital respite breaks to unpaid carers.*

Repository Sale. Religious Christmas cards and gifts will be on sale in the narthex after all Masses the weekend of **16th / 17th November.**

Antiques Fair. The next Antiques Fair is on **Saturday 16th November,** 10.00am – 3.00pm in the parish hall. There will be a Repository stall at the fair.

Are you a Catholic teacher working in a non-Catholic school? The Diocese of Westminster is hosting an evening to engage with Catholic teachers and leaders currently working outside of Catholic education at Vaughan House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1QN on **Monday 18th November,** 6.30 – 8.00pm. Please register intention to attend at eduemc@rcdow.org.uk and see the poster in the narthex.

Admission to Reception for September 2020. St Ignatius Catholic Primary School, Green Street, Sunbury on Thames TW16 6QG is holding an Open Morning on **Thursday 7th November 2019,** 9.30am - 11.30am. An address will take place at 9.30am for prospective parents. Deadline for applications is **15th January 2020** to your Local Authority. Each Catholic school you apply to (regardless of where you rank them) will also require their own forms to be completed by this deadline.

Free Christmas lunch for local pensioners. The Ash tree public house is inviting 25 local pensioners to a free Christmas lunch on **Tuesday 10th December 2019** 1.00pm for 1.30 start. The lunch will start with a free drink on arrival followed by lunch.

Please fill in your name & food choice on the sheet in the narthex.

If you need further information, please call Moya Hogan on 07791 641456.

Readings for 10th November, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Maccabees 7: 1-2, 9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 – 3:5; Luke 20: 27-38

Emergency Exits: In the event of an emergency, please note that the three fire exits from the church are the main church entrance, the side door to the left of St Joseph's Chapel, and the main entrance to the hall.

PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

for anniversaries in November since 2012. Bethany Payne, Frank Collins, Margaret Curran, Elizabeth Gicquel, Catherine Greenwood, Anne Khan, Laszlo Kormendy, Melissa Morgan, Stephen Mulligan, Patrick O'Reilly, Dominic Regan, Andrew Stuart, Norman Taylor, Davide Tozzi, Irene Walley, Sheelagh Williams, Ron Worley.

for Fr Ulick Loring and the parishioners of Twickenham in the Upper Thames Deanery; and for staff and students of St Mary's College, Twickenham.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that a spirit of dialogue, encounter and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.

Mass Intentions 3rd – 10th November

Sat 2nd 6.00pm Terry Richardson RIP; **Sunday 3rd 9.15am** The people of the parish,

11.00am Bernie Driscoll RIP, **6.00pm** Patrick Joseph Young RIP;

Mon 4th 9.15am Margaret Curran RIP; **Tues 5th 9.15am** Holy Souls on the November List; **Wed 6th 9.15am** Holy Souls on the November List; **Fri 8th 9.15am** Margaret Martinz RIP; **Sat 9th 9.15am** A special intention (CE)

Sunday 10th Vigil Mass Saturday, 6.00pm Munidasa Saparamadu RIP;

9.15am Deceased members of the D'Souza, Menezes and Fernandes families,

11.00am John and Margaret Curran RIP, **6.00pm** The people of the parish

Sunday Mass

(Vigil) Saturday, 6.00pm

9.15am Family (Folk Group, Children's Liturgy of the Word)

**11.00am Sung (First Sunday, Ordinary of the Mass sung in Latin)
6.00pm**

Holy Days of Obligation Mass

9.15am and 7.00pm

Weekday Mass

9.15am Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction

Saturday 9.45 – 10.15am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10.15 – 10.45am (and at any time by appointment)

Sacrament of Baptism

Normally celebrated on a Saturday once a month. To arrange a Baptism contact Baptism Catechist Lee Gibson on 07713 760281 or lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com

St Michael's Catholic Church

112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD

Telephone: 01784 252230; Email: ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Website: <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>

This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699

Parish Priest: Fr Sidon Sagar FDP; Assistant Priest: Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP
