

**THIRTY-FIRST  
SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR C

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Loving God,  
you want nothing better  
than for us  
to turn back to you,  
away from our wrongdoing.  
Help us to see the times  
we do not obey  
your commandments  
and be ready promptly  
to put right those things  
our sins have damaged.  
We make this prayer to you  
through Christ our Lord.

**FOCUS OF THE READINGS:**

Both of our readings focus on the forgiveness of God. The first reading, from Wisdom, is a prayer for mercy, based on God's love for all created beings. The God who created us cannot reject us!

The Gospel presents the appealing story of Zacchaeus, the "little man" whose life was changed by an encounter with Jesus. The focus of the reading comes as the conclusion: "I came to find and save people who are lost." We see no indication in the story that Zacchaeus had any initial faith in Jesus. Perhaps it was only out of curiosity that he climbed the sycamore tree to see him. The encounter is initiated by Jesus. We have here an example of Jesus' consistent identification with sinners and the power of that identification for conversion. The identification is often expressed by Jesus eating in the home of sinners, a gesture

**FIRST READING:** *Wisdom 11:22-24; 12:2*

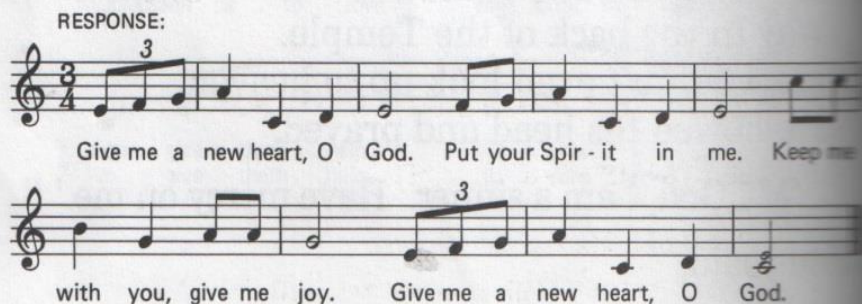
*A reading from the book of Wisdom.*

O God, the world is only a small part  
of all that you have created.  
It is like a tiny grain of sand.  
And yet you love each one of us,  
and you show mercy to everyone.  
You help us change our hearts and lives,  
and you forget about our sins.  
You are the One  
who made all things and all people,  
and you love them all.  
Your living spirit is in everyone.  
Because you love us,  
you correct our faults little by little,  
so that we will turn to you, our God.

*The Word of the Lord.*

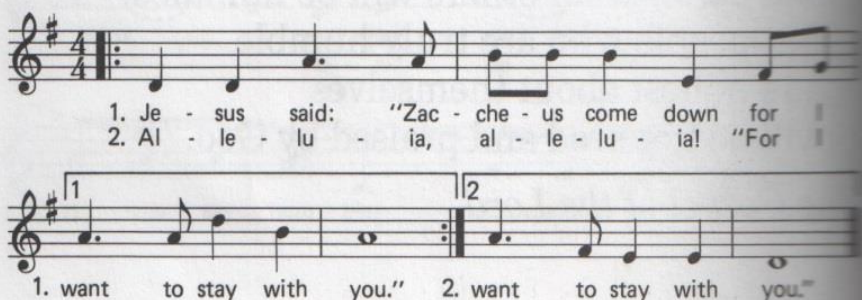
**RESPONSE:** *Psalm 51*

RESPONSE:



Give me a new heart, O God. Put your Spir - it in me. Keep me  
with you, give me joy. Give me a new heart, O God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**



1. Je - sus said: "Zac - che - us come down for |  
2. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! "For |  
1. want to stay with you." 2. want to stay with you."

GOSPEL: *Luke 19:1-10*

*A reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

Jesus was going through the city of Jericho, and many people came out to see him.

There was a man there named Zacchaeus who was the head of all the tax collectors and was very rich.

Zacchaeus also wanted to see Jesus and find out who he was.

But Zacchaeus was a very short man and couldn't see Jesus through the crowd, so he ran ahead

and climbed into a sycamore tree and waited for Jesus to pass.

When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said,

"Zacchaeus, come down! Hurry!  
I want to stay at your house today!"

Zacchaeus was so excited that he hurried down and welcomed Jesus into his home.

The people who saw this were angry and said,

"Look, this man, Jesus,  
is staying in the home of a sinner!"

But Zacchaeus said to Jesus,

"Lord, I am going to give  
half of everything I have to the poor.  
And if I have ever cheated anyone out of money,  
I am going to pay them back  
four times as much."

Then Jesus said to Zacchaeus,

"Today you have been saved  
because you, too,  
are one of the family of Abraham.  
For I have come to seek  
and to save the people who are lost."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

detestable to the Pharisees of his time.

*In kindness and mercy, Jesus said,  
"Zacchaeus come down, for I want to  
stay with you."*

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS  
WITH CHILDREN:

This Gospel story will almost always appeal to children (and adults as well!). There is a light heartedness to it that makes the encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus the sort of occurrence we naturally want to applaud to show our joy.

Invite the children to recall and visualize. Help them to imagine the scene:

- The crowds.
- Jesus and those with him.
- Zacchaeus scurrying along, looking for an open space, and finally running to climb the sycamore tree.

Ask the children:

- What might the crowd have been like?
- Why did everyone want to see Jesus?
- Who was Zacchaeus?
- Why did Jesus and Zacchaeus meet? (It is important that the children see that Jesus spoke first to a sinner. Jesus sought him out.)
- What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus? (Emphasize that he *ate* in Zacchaeus' house.)
- How did Zacchaeus respond?

Two points should be emphasized:

1) Jesus came to look for sinners so he could save them.

2) When we truly meet Jesus, we change our lives.