

St Elizabeth of Hungary | Tuesday 17 November 2020

Today is Tuesday the 17 November, the feast of St Elizabeth of Hungary, in the 33rd week of Ordinary Time.

Paul Zach and Sandra McCracken with the Porter's Gate sing 'The Zacchaeus Song'.

In today's reading we return with Jesus and the crowds to Jericho. Yesterday we heard of the blind man crying out to Jesus who was passing. Today we hear of Zacchaeus who wants to see Jesus as he passes by. But as you listen to the reading, notice that it does not say that Zacchaeus wants to meet Jesus. What else do you notice as you hear today's reading from the Gospel of Luke?

Luke 19:1-10

He entered Jericho & was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector & was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead & climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up & said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry & come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down & was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble & said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there & said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; & if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out & to save the lost.'

As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus has few friends. His wealth gives him status and privilege; but his life is lonely and isolated. Zacchaeus has heard of Jesus and his reputation for eating with tax collectors and sinners, but he is too small to see over the crowd, so he runs ahead & climbs a sycamore tree, so that he can overlook Jesus as he passes by. He wants to see who Jesus is. What does he see?

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus as he passed by. Jesus, however, does not pass by the tree. He notices the little man up in the tree and calls Zacchaeus by name. He does not shout up condemnation, but invites Zacchaeus down from his lonely perch. "Hurry, I must stay at your house today." Jesus does not demand repentance from Zacchaeus before eating with him. How does this speak to you today?

What do you see as you listen to the reading again.

Because of Jesus' attitude of acceptance, Zacchaeus comes down from the tree to face Jesus. Can I come down from my lonely perch to face the one who loves me and accepts me? The Lord who wants to visit me today. What do I want to say to the one who has come to seek out and to save the lost?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.