Commentary on the Readings for Sunday, November 3, 2019
The 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

To better understand the link between the various readings for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, we need to begin with the Gospel Reading and then return to the normal order of the readings.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the ***Gospel of St. Luke (19:1-10)***. In this passage, we hear the familiar story of Zacchaeus, a Jewish tax collector who longed to "see" Jesus. This implies that Zacchaeus must have heard about Jesus and wanted to know more about Him. So, hearing that Jesus was coming his way, Zacchaeus runs ahead of the crowd and climbs a tree to get a better look. Jesus, knowing this man's thoughts, stops at the tree, calls the tax collector down and then goes home to have dinner with him. (See **Revelation 3:20**) Now, we can look at this scene from a purely human level and see a small man in a tree and Jesus stopping to chat with him, but the more important point here is that Jesus will go out of His way to find those who are sincerely looking for Him. We don't have to climb trees or do heroic things. We just need to open our heart and mind and invite Him in.

Now, returning to the **First Reading** from the ***Book of Wisdom (11:22-12:2)***, we hear or read the words of a wise sage, who recognizes the greatness of God *"before whom the whole universe is but a grain from a balance or a drop of dew,"* yet He loves each one of us and is even gentle with sinners, "rebuking offenders little by little." God is a loving and Just God, with the little as well as the mighty.

In the **Responsorial Psalm** ***(145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14)***, the Psalmist is giving us a prayer that anyone could say or sing, even Zacchaeus after his encounter with Jesus on the road and then coming to his house to have supper. Wow! What an overwhelming experience! But this is what each of us can have if we really open our mind and heart to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist or in our own private prayer. He is there waiting for us to make that special move to seek Him.

The **Second Reading** is from St. Paul's ***Second Letter to the Thessalonians (1:11-2.2)***. Its message is to dispel the Thessalonians' fear of not being ready when the Lord returns to earth. Because of the severe persecutions by the Romans (and some Jews), they thought that surely the end was near. Paul encourages them (and us) to seek the Lord every day while we can. Don't wait until "the end." This is true for us today. We should be like Zacchaeus, running ahead to find Jesus in life's daily activities and not waiting until we go to church on Sunday.

Seeking the Lord is not an exercise of looking from treetops or mountains or into dark closets. Rather, it is a spiritual exercise of the mind and heart; but it takes just as much effort, honesty and sincerity as the more physical efforts. God made us for Him to love. All we need do is be willing to accept His love in whatever manner He wishes to give it. Further, "seeking" or "seeing" the Lord is not a matter of a time or an event; but rather a ***continuing process*** that we should be pursuing every day of our life. So I leave you with this thought: ***"Are you seeking Jesus to come into your heart and home? If not, why not?"*** Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

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