

October 30, 2022  
God's Space for Everything and Everyone (31st Sunday in Ordinary Time)  
Gospel of Luke 19:1-10  
Fr. John

The Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes states that there is a time and place for **everything** under heaven.

The Book of Wisdom [today's first reading] speaks of God: '... for your immortal spirit **is in all things.**'

In the gospel reading, Jesus says of the excluded tax collector: '**Zaccheus too** is a son of Abraham'.

And in the third Eucharistic prayer of the Mass we hear: '... by the power and working of the Holy Spirit You give life to **all things** and you make them **holy.**'

When we connect the dots of these sayings [and many more like them throughout the scriptures], what are we to make of the Creator's relationship to all He has made?

The obvious response is that God not only loves everything that He has fashioned, but that He, in a mysterious way is embedded in it. His very spirit, His divine DNA resides in the very material world which He created.

Our Catholic tradition centres around the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and we regard the consecrated bread and wine as sacred and we reverence it as so.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we extended that reverence to all of God's creation? A healthy integration of both the spiritual and material worlds excludes nothing and no one.

What makes the earth a sacred place and the human body a temple of the Holy Spirit is the creative touch of God and His imperishable Spirit which guides human action and sustains all earthly creatures.

In our present day and age we are slowly waking up to an awareness of the necessity of being good stewards of our planet rather than exploiters of it. We are gradually awakening to the need to be respecters of the dignity of every human being despite the fact that human trafficking and social injustices are still rampant in many parts of the world.

Unfortunately many still **cannot** see that holiness is to be found in the life that we now have and treat religion as if it were a mere **evacuation plan** to escape to heaven while leaving the earth a garbage dump with a lot of discarded human beings like Zaccheus left behind.

In doing this we are inadvertently denying the very message of the Incarnation in which Jesus by his very coming has blessed all creation. Holiness is to be found therefore in all creation and in an awareness of that we would stand in awe and wonder of the Creator and recognize his human face, not only in Jesus, but in all of our fellow creatures.

The crowds complained that Jesus had gone to a sinner's house as a dinner guest. It betrays that old dualistic attitude of 'us versus them' which is still being played out in so much of our media, our politics and yes, even in the Church.

Seeking out and celebrating the goodness or the potential goodness in others needs to be the task that we must have as we journey through this life. Did not Jesus call us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Yet so often we find ourselves being the opposite.

It reminds me of the story of a young priest's arrival in a small Irish village. Among one of his first tasks was to preside at a wake for one of the less popular residents of the community. Having just arrived, the cleric didn't know the deceased and so he invited those who were gathered to speak a few kind words about the departed soul. But no one came forward and there was an uneasy silence. The priest became rather flustered and finally said 'we will not end the service until someone says something respectful about the deceased!' There was some nervous coughing, clearing of throats, and shuffling of feet. Finally from somewhere in the back of the room came a gruffled voice: 'Well, his brother was **even worse**, ye know!'

Please God may we be the light and seasoning rather than the darkness and the bitterness as we journey through this life. Amen