

Reflection on the Gospel-31st Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C (Luke 19:1-10)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

In 2015, a little book came my way and proceeded to turn my world upside down. The author of that book was German forester Peter Wohlleben, its title *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from a Secret World*. I have long mourned the destruction of trees, local and global, including the threatened trees of the Amazon. I grew up loving, valuing and sometimes climbing the trees of the Macedon Ranges. I now live among the trees on the outskirts of Ballarat. Wohlleben's book brought home to me how much I had still to learn about these precious gifts of life and love.

Luke's story of the toll-collector Zacchaeus provides me with yet another opportunity to give thanks for the wonder of trees, their intrinsic beauty and the life they sustain. A sycamore tree is at the heart of this story. Once I would have thought of this tree simply as one of the props in the human story that unfolds, providing as it does the platform for a height challenged would-be disciple of Jesus to "see". The human encounter with the holy is foregrounded in this story and is in no way to be discounted. But let us not relegate the tree to the status of prop. As I write this reflection, the Synod on the Amazon is underway in Rome and the tropical forests of northern Australia are threatened by fire. The planet cannot breathe without its trees. We might keep this in mind as we turn to the human elements in the story of Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus is a wealthy man, a chief tax collector, possibly responsible for overseeing the activities of other tax collectors. He wants to see what Jesus is like and he lets nothing get in the way. He runs ahead and climbs the sycamore tree. Jesus looks up and tells him to come down quickly, "for I must stay at your house today." Zacchaeus offers hospitality "joyfully". Hospitality, joy, haste to respond to divine visitation: these are constant themes in Luke.

"All those who see" complain that Jesus chooses to stay with a sinner, no doubt considering themselves more worthy hosts for God's prophet. There are clues in the text that Zacchaeus has already changed his ways, however. The future tense in translations ('I will pay') obscures this important element. He gives half his property to the destitute and, if he has cheated anyone, he pays them back four times the amount. Jesus looks at Zacchaeus and assures him that salvation has come to his house. He then acts to restore honour to Zacchaeus in the eyes of those who hold him and his kind in contempt. Zacchaeus is affirmed as a true descendant of his forbears in faith. Salvation for our house, our "common home", will only come with comparable attention to what we have despoiled.

Luke 19:1-10 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and 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 and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to Jesus, "Look, half of my possessions, I will give to the poor; and 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 Human One came to seek out and to save the lost."

ST ALIPIUS PARISH—BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year C, Sunday 3rd Nov 2019 *Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius' Parish Church
82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul's Church
701 Fiskens St, BUNINYONG

Contact Details

Parish Office: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

Hours: 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri **SAP Liturgy email:** sapliturgy@gmail.com

Telephone: 5332 6611 **SAP Liturgy website:** www.sapliturgy.net.au

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au **Parish Website:** www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Clergy and Staff

Priests: Frs Justin Driscoll, Jorge De Chavez OSJ, Vincent Pham Van Long CSsR

Visiting Priests: Frs Dan Arundell and Barry Ryan

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O'Beirne

Child Safety Officer: Roxanne Leed

Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue

Funeral Ministry: Kathy Curran & Carmel Flynn

Masses This Week

Thursday, 7th November	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Church
	11.00 am	Mercy Place (Corbett St) Anointing Mass
Friday, 8th November	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Church (Public Holiday, Show Day)

Next Weekend's Masses

St Alipius' Church, Ballarat East	Saturday	9th November	6.00 pm
	Sunday	10th November	10.30 am
SS Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong	Sunday	10th November	9.00 am

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time—Year C

Readings	First:	2 Maccabees	7:1-2, 9-14
	Second:	2 Thessalonians	2:16—3:5
	Gospel:	Luke	20:27-38

Recent Deaths: Mary Coutts, Kerrie Dowling, John Elliott, Bernie Nolan, John O'Keefe

Anniversaries: Nora Irvin, Kevin O'Keefe

We pray for Kateri Byrne (Albury), Peter Martin and Bob Marty who are unwell

Plenary Council 2020: National Theme for Discernment

How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is Humble, Healing and Merciful?
 You are warmly encouraged to attend one of our first discernment gatherings for our parish that will be held in the St Alipius' Hall on Monday 11th November 7—9 pm, and Tuesday 12th November 1—3 pm. A copy of the snapshot report for this theme can be accessed [here](#) or collected from the Parish Office during Office hours. Also please register your attendance.

November Masses of Remembrance for those who have died

Welcome to all celebrating with us the Masses of Remembrance, followed by a cuppa .

- St Alipius': Saturday 2nd November at the 6.00pm Vigil Mass
- Ss Peter & Paul's: Sunday 3rd November at our 10.30am Mass

Please Save the Date — Anointing Mass

St Alipius' Church on Wednesday 11th December at 2.00pm.

Mass of thanksgiving for Bishop Shane Mackinlay (Bishop of Sandhurst)

St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat, Wednesday, 13th November at 7.00pm, followed by supper in the Cathedral Hall. All welcome to attend.

Singers and musicians from St Alipius' Parish please contact Julie Boyd in the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 53377159. Practice times are Sunday, November 3 and Sunday, November 10 at 6.15pm at St Patrick's Cathedral.

RCIA Diocesan & State Conferences, "It takes a Village" – Registrations Open

"It takes a village" is the theme of both the Diocesan and State RCIA conferences this year. The Diocesan Conference will be held on Friday, November 15 from 5.30pm – 9.00pm and the State Conference will be held on Saturday, November 16 from 8.30am – 4.30pm. Both events will be held at St Patrick's Cathedral Precinct, Ballarat. Registrations are now open - go to www.ballarat.catholic.org.au. Those attending the Diocesan Conference are also welcome and encouraged to attend the State Conference. Previous RCIA catechists, sponsors and interested parishioners are encouraged to attend.

Counting Teams

This Week:	Team 1:	L. Noonan ©, G. Clarkson, L. Mullane
Next Week:	Team 3:	C. Tarquinio ©, M. Tarquinio (Team 2 now retired)
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Parish:	Envelopes:	\$ 1175.70
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 135.00
		\$ 1610.70

*Thank you to those who
 contributed to the
 collections last weekend*

Presbytery: \$ 674.00

Annual Collection for retired Clergy: \$ 1659.70

Stewardship Renewal - Parish Groups, Ministries and Organisations

Last week we highlighted the number of responses for Liturgy and Celebration, this week we highlight those indicating a desire for Scripture Study and Prayer Groups

- 10 Advent/Lent Discussion groups (all have been contacted for Advent, see below)
- 4 Gospel/Old Testament
- 3 Meditation Group (see last week's newsletter)
- 1 Prayer Network
- 4 Rosary Group
- 4 Scripture Discussion Group
- 1 Small Home Groups for prayer

Advent Discussion Group at Saint Peter and Paul's

After Mass and morning tea at St Peter and Paul's this Sunday 3rd November, there will be a brief meeting in the small chapel of those interested. It is proposed that Advent discussions be at 10:30 am on Thursdays, 28 November, 5 December, 12 December and 19 December. An evening meeting could also be possible depending on numbers.

St Alipius Primary School Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Launch Invitation

To be held at the Koorie Hub, 407 Main Road, Monday 4th November 2019, 5pm—7pm. Please RSVP to 53311816 or eclarke@saballarat.catholic.edu.au for catering purposes. This year, St Alipius Parish School has engaged with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program to create a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We have drafted and formalised a RAP that includes a formal statement of commitment that promotes reconciliation and we have named specific actions that will enable us to build on the great work that we have been doing in this space for quite some time.

Towards a St Alipius Parish Pastoral Council

Parishioners are invited to prayerfully discern who amongst your fellow parishioners have the gifts and capacity to be a member of the Pastoral Council enabling the Council to fulfil its role. You are invited to nominate them simply by putting their name forward with the reasons why you believe they would be suitable. Please forward to the St Alipius' Parish Office. Those nominated by you will then be invited to discernment gatherings to consider becoming members of a Parish Pastoral Council. Nominations close Friday November 15th 2019.

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Nomination for St Alipius Parish Pastoral Council (return by email or drop into the Office)

Name of Person being nominated.....

In what ways do you believe they are suitable (what gifts do they have that you see)?

.....

Your name