

HOW DOES THIS
IMAGE SPEAK TO ME
IN MY PRAYER AND
LIFE?



Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

You love all that exists. *First Reading*

The Lord is kind and full of compassion. *Responsorial Psalm*

The Lord supports all who fall and raises all who are bowed down. *Responsorial Psalm*

The Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost. *Gospel*

Father in heaven, God of power and Lord of mercy, from whose fullness we have received, direct our steps in our everyday efforts. May the changing moods of the human heart and the limits which our failings impose on hope never blind us to you, source of every good. *Old Opening Prayer*



AMDG
31ST SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR C,
30 OCTOBER 2016



The Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised.

I take time to slow down, become still and enter into the awareness that I am in God's loving presence.

I look back on the past week: events at home or at work, people I met, moments of joy and energy or of pain and sadness. Recognising some of the ways in which God was present to me, drawing me towards life, I speak to God, about all that happened, asking for the grace I need for the coming week.

The theme of today's readings is the gift of salvation for all: God's loving mercy extends to all that exists (First Reading); God is 'kind and full of compassion' (Responsorial Psalm); Jesus welcomes a despised, excluded tax collector (Gospel).

What does salvation mean to me? When and where have I known God's saving power? Are there areas of my life in need of that saving power at this time? Areas of my world in such need?

I speak to God/Jesus, about these things, as to a friend.

FIRST READING: WISDOM 11: 22–12:2

In your sight, Lord, the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales, like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground. Yet you are merciful to all, because you can do all things and overlook men's sins so that they can repent. Yes, you love all that exists, you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it. And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist, how be conserved if not called forth by you? You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life, you whose imperishable spirit is in all. Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend you, admonish and remind them of how they have sinned, so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord.

This passage from the Book of Wisdom, points out that God's relationship with everything that exists is one of love and mercy.

I pause for a moment, becoming still, finding my centre in God, asking for the grace of openness of mind and heart. I then read the passage, pausing where I am drawn to a word or phrase, turning it over in my mind, letting it touch my heart, and speaking to God as I am moved.

The author of the Book of Wisdom sees God as 'lover of life', loving 'all that exists'. What does this say to me about God? What do I want to say to God? How does God respond to me?

I read the passage again, letting myself be drawn into the author's whole sense of the goodness of creation, letting it lead me to express praise, trust, or simply to rest in God's loving presence.

I end with the *Glory be to the Father ...*

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 19: 1–10

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

I read the text slowly, more than once. Then, using my senses, I imagine the scene. What do I see? Hear? Perhaps Zacchaeus, desperate to see Jesus, casting aside his dignity and pride. Do I identify with Zacchaeus? Do I know my own needs and desires?

I notice Jesus looking up and saying to Zacchaeus, 'I must stay at your house today'. Perhaps in my imagination I see Jesus look on me and give me the same invitation. How do I hear it? How do I feel? What do Jesus and I share with one another?

I witness Zacchaeus' generous offer and hear Jesus' words: 'Today salvation has come to this house.' As I listen, what stirs in me? What do I want to say to Jesus? And he to me?

I 'stay with' him, sharing heart to heart, and when ready I end with a suitable prayer or the words of today's Psalm:

I will bless your name for ever ...