

FR.TK. REFLECTIONS 31st SUNDAY YEAR C 2022.

ZACCHAEUS THE TAX COLLECTOR:

The tax collectors generally are not popular in many place and especially in the so called developing countries.They make thriving of corruption especially in Kenya.Many sectors run by the county officials who are actually tax collectors no services will be rendered effectively and facilitated quickly without kick back commonly known as (Chai,tea) with this background the tax collectors are not popular to date.Hopefully the new government in Kenya will overhaul and address this serious matter that all may be served irrespective of the tribe,color political affiliations or financial capability.

This is the case we are confronted with in our todays Gospel with this episode of the Short rich chief tax collector Zachaeus.During the time of Jesus they were not popular either they were treated in the same manner like **thieves,prostitutes,murderers hence sinners**.They were the cast members of the society, regarded as **traitors** since they worked for the Roman Empire.They were well,know in overtaxing the citizen and obvious what was above found the way to their pocket hence they were very rich like this one.

People of Jericho must have been **shocked** and **disappointed with Jesus giving attention,having a talk and above all going for tea,coffee and Dinner with such a character**.Jesus justified himself by saying that **this is also a son of Abraham,the son of man came to seek and save the lost(Lk.19:10)**.Is this not what we are getting in our first reading about **mercy of God? God does not desire the death or even destruction of a sinner,due to his mercy he call then to repentance (wis.11:22)**.He is always calling us back and ready to pardon our sins, Only that we **repent and return to Him**.what an invitation for all of us as weak human being.This is where we see the mercy of God in action.Despite our human weakness, we are justified by His **mercy and love**.

This is what we are learning in the Gospel today, Jesus **spots the poor tax collector on top of trees, he stopped, he looked up, he called him by name and invited him to come down!** What was running in Zacchaeus' mind? Is he going to **judge me, has he discovered the kind of person I am! how did he spot me then!** Jesus had other ideas of him, didn't **judge, condemn, label him as a traitor, criticize, embarrass him in the crowd, condemn wealthy or even call him names.** Jesus showed Zacchaeus **care, respect, concern, love and compassion.** He touched his heart and this led him to **conversion and change of heart seeing the errors he had previously done** he was converted and even promised to repay back three times what he had taken wrongly. Zacchaeus responded to **Jesus kindness.** that little act of appreciating him triggered **healing and renewal to him.** Though he had climbed the tree to have a glimpse of Jesus he had **face to face and heart to heart encounter he discovered not only what Christ looked like but also what his heart is like.**

Jesus will always follow us from anywhere we are, in the disco halls, streets, store, restaurants, pub, hospitals and he will call us to come to realities of life. without condemning us he is inviting us with these words ***come to me just as you are.*** what a really good way of new evangelization to approach people in their situation and call them with compassion and love without, criticizing, judging or even condemning. what a great challenge for the evangelizes particularly the priests without overlooking the lay people in our modern world. As Christians we must make people **warm, have that caring touch and kindness. lets us be superhighways of graces of Christ to, locate them in whichever tree they might have climbed. Be Christ to someone and locate a Zachaeus somewhere.**

Lord remove that stone heart of hatred, jealousy, gossip, judgmental replace it with heart of flesh care, compassion and love.

Open our hearts when they are Closed. warm them when cold.

Let them produce fruits of love.

Help us to be participants not spectators.

