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Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C
November 3rd, 2013
Gospel: Luke 19: 1-10

Everyone wants to see God in their lives. All of us want to see the face of Jesus in the big things and the small things in life. We seek to see Jesus in the big changes, when we have to move to a new city or get a new job. When our lives take big dramatic shifts, we want to believe that it is God's will. Likewise, in the small things in life, in our daily trials and tribulations, in the ups and downs of day-to-day living, we want to see God's presence. We want to feel God's hand working in our lives each and every day. But while we all want to see Jesus in the big things and the small things of our lives, the sad thing is we don't. We don't always see God working in our lives.

This problem and the solution to this problem are symbolically depicted in today's Gospel passage. We are all like Zacchaeus. We all want to see who Jesus is, but we can't quite see Him. There are two reasons for this.

The first. We have a hard time seeing Jesus because all of us are too short. Saint Luke says that Zacchaeus could not see Jesus because he was short in stature. And while we are not all physically short like Zacchaeus was, I think each one of us suffers from spiritual shortness. All of us suffer from some type of stunted growth in our spiritual development. And this lack of development, this spiritual shortness manifests itself as a lack of trust.

Our spiritual shortness, our lack of trust, prevents us from seeing Jesus in the big things in our life. When there is a major shift in our lives, we don't fully place our trust in God. We don't cling fast to our faith, always hoping and believing that God will help us weather the storm. Rather, when big things in our lives change, we are captured by fear. When we graduate

from college and aren't quite sure what the next step is. When we lose our job and have to find another. When things get rocky in our marriage and we don't know how to fix it. When someone in our family gets sick. When someone we love dies. When these big things happen, we are afraid. We don't always see the face of Jesus in these changes because we are too short, too short in trust.

The second. Zacchaeus's shortness is not the only thing that prevents him from seeing Jesus. Saint Luke tells us that what really prevents Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus is the crowd. Spiritually speaking, it is not only our spiritual shortness that prevents us from seeing the things of God, but there are many other things which crowd our spiritual vision.

And I think it is these spiritual crowds which make it difficult to see Jesus in the small things in our lives. It's the noise and the busy-ness. It's the endless to-do list of emails to write, text messages to answer, and phone calls to make. But it's also all those bumps in our day. All those times when things don't go our way. All those times when our plans get messed up. All of that junk crowds our spiritual vision so that rather than seeing Jesus in our daily lives and in our daily work, we only see annoyance and frustration. Ultimately, these spiritual crowds manifest themselves as a lack of patience, a lack of patience in the face of the frustrations of daily life.

However, today's Gospel does not only depicts this problem we have, this problem we have of not being able to see Christ in the big things and the little things. But it also offers us the solution. In the face of our spiritual shortness and our spiritual crowds, we again need to be like Zacchaeus. Like Zacchaeus, we need to run ahead and climb a tree.

In ancient times, the early fathers of the Church thought that every time the Bible mentioned a tree, it was a foreshadowing of the Cross. And I believe this interpretation is valid here. The tree, which Zacchaeus climbed up and the tree that we too need to climb up, is the

Cross. It is by the Cross of Christ that we overcome our spiritual shortness and get rid of our spiritual crowds.

If we look at how Christ commended His spirit into the hands of Father, it is much easier for us to commend our big struggles to God, our Father. If we look at Christ's trust in the Father while hanging on the Cross, it is much easier for us to overcome our spiritual shortness and trust rather than fear. If we look at how much Christ suffered for our sake, it is much easier to find joy rather than frustration in our daily trials. If we look at how Christ suffered patiently in front of the shouting Roman soldiers, it is much easier to push out the noise of the spiritual crowds and embrace the patient silence of prayer.

Learning to embrace the crosses of our lives, the big ones and the small ones, allows us to conquer the fear and the frustration. The fear of big scary changes in our lives. The frustration of all those little annoyances and setback in our daily lives. Learning to embrace the Cross allows us to grow past our spiritual shortness, grow past our lack of trust. Learning to embrace the Cross allows us cast away those spiritual crowds, cast away all that impatience. Learning to embrace the Cross allows us to see Jesus in the big things and the small things.

But the story of Zacchaeus does not end there on the tree. And the story of salvation does not end there at the Cross. But rather, Zacchaeus goes on to meet Jesus in his house where Jesus comes to stay. And the story of salvation goes on to the Resurrection where Christ gathers all whom He has saved into the heavenly banquet.

And again, the same goes for us. Our story does not end at the Cross, at the tree we climb, but it continues on to the Eucharist. It continues on to the Body and Blood of Christ, our foretaste of the heavenly banquet, where we welcome Jesus under our roof like Zacchaeus

welcomed Jesus under his. It continues on to this sacrament where Jesus stays with us and offers us His salvation like He stayed with Zacchaeus and offered salvation to his house.

And so today, at this Mass, and throughout this week. I want you to pick two things: something big and something small. I want you to pick one of your big fears and one of your small frustrations. And I want you to place them on this altar today. For your big fear, let the bread of life help you grow in trust and mature past your spiritual shortness. For your little frustration, your little annoyance, let the chalice of salvation wipe away your impatience and dispel the spiritual crowds which dominate your vision. So that we may always remember how blessed we are to be called to the supper of the Lamb where we meet Christ and see Him in the big things and in the small things in our lives.