

## Homily For Tuesday of the 33rd Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

### St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Nov 20, 2018

**Rev 3: 1-6, 14-22** "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking. If you hear my voice ... I will come in."

**Psalm 15: 1-5** "Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right ... may dwell on your holy hill."

**Luke 19: 1-10** "Salvation has come to this house ... for the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

#### Introduction

This is a time in history when we especially need to be aware of how the wisdom of the world stacks up against the wisdom of God. Such wisdom is captured in certain phrases, which may contain some truth but generally lead away from God:

***Follow your bliss.*** Do what makes you happy. It sounds good but, in the wisdom of the world, Jesus never seems to be the answer to that directive.

***Carpe diem.*** Do it now and not worry about the future. But God wants a future for us in the fullness of his own blessed life. In the wisdom of the world, that fullness is set aside for seizing on passing wealth, the kind that Zacchaeus was ready to give up for something greater.

***Opportunity only knocks once.*** In the wisdom of the world, if you miss that opportunity, your life is ruined forever. But we believe in being redeemed from loss. Hearing God and repenting is always available to us. Jesus is always, as we read in Revelation, standing at the door and knocking.

Zacchaeus knows that there is a happiness, a bliss, which he has been missing out on because of his pursuit of worldly riches. The churches of Sardis and Laodicea are following worldly wisdom and it is leading them away from God and from life.

#### Report Cards

The seven churches of Asia Minor receive report cards about their life as a church. These report card comments are also for us: whether the Diocese of Calgary, the parish of St. Peter's (or whichever parish you belong to), or for us as individuals.

The condemnation of Sardis? You think you are alive, but you are dead. You think you are following your bliss, but you are really following a path that leads to destruction. On the other hand, far from having missed your opportunity, you simply need to open your ears to hear what God is saying, and to repent- turn your life around. Wake up. Come to life. But, at this point, unlike Zacchaeus, they don't have a heart which desperately wants to know God. Unlike Zacchaeus, they have gone dead inside.

The condemnation of Laodicea is worse. What is worse than death? Complacency. They have the wrong kind of riches and, unlike Zacchaeus, think they are just fine as they are. They are following a bliss of their own making. They don't feel the need to turn their lives around. In both churches, except for a few, they don't hear any knocking at the door.

### **The Encounter With Jesus**

Jesus tells all of the churches, and we, ourselves, to Listen!!! Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. This message is for us. Jesus is standing at the door of our diocese, our parishes, our ... hearts. He wants to come in now.

In the Gospel passage and in the invitation to the churches, it is about Jesus coming into our house. "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." It is an imperative, not a suggestion. The heart that is open, like his, must act on that openness. That's the opportunity which might be missed- not Jesus knocking, but our readiness to hear and open the door.

The result for Zacchaeus is a radical transformation. Half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much, which is a prescription from the Levitical law. It is clear he has been thinking about it and therefore knows what he has to do.

Knowing when to answer the door and when not is a real trick. A lot of times we don't want to answer the door because it is just going to be a solicitation. On the other hand, what if you miss your one chance to stock up on Girl Guide cookies?

But the strategy which works so well at our front door is a disaster when it comes to God. If we don't open the door, we leave Jesus outside. If we wait too long, there will be other distractions. Our love may grow cold. We may become either spiritually dead or complacent. Jesus will still be there waiting for us but we may have stopped listening to him ask to come inside our house.

### Call To Action

If we were to follow the Zacchaeus model, it might be in four steps.

1. Be ready. Be awake. It won't happen if we distract ourselves.
2. Desire to be in his presence. Meet him. If you look out the window and see the Girl Guides coming down the street, you know they are going to knock on your door and you are ready to welcome them.
3. Recognize, not carpe diem, but "this is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."
4. Let him transform you from the inside.

Zacchaeus runs, unlike those in Laodicea. He's alive to his need for relationship and repentance, unlike Sardis. He hears the knock and opens the door of his house, and of his heart. We need to keep praying Lord, let me wake up. Let me answer your call, your knock. Come into my home, my heart. Let me see. Let me be transformed.