

Scripture

Wisdom 11:22-12:2; 2Thessalonians 1:11-2:2; Luke 19:1-10

As devout Christians we are well-represented by Zacchaeus. He was a little man. In the grand scheme of things, how often do we consider ourselves to be insignificant? Part of this may be credited to some level of humility but there's always that inner self-demoralizing voice that asks, "How is it possible that I matter to God?" The answer is simple but not necessarily understandable: We are sinners which bewilderingly qualifies us as recipients of Christ's love. It is in our inner house that he dwells so that he may stay with us always. Through prayer and silence we may visit that inner house to be with our Lord where that self-demoralizing voice is overpowered by the voice that says: "Salvation has come to this house." As qualifiers of salvation, we are indeed descendants of Abraham. While Jesus may never require us to literally give up half of our possessions, He does ask for detachment from them. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost." For Christians this is a most comforting verse because the word "was" is past tense. In salvation history there was a time when we were among the lost, but by surrendering our lives to Christ's care and accepting his gift of salvation we can now joyfully look ahead without ever having to look back. But the push forward has to be an ongoing process of spiritual growth.

Saints Speak

"Christians must lean on the Cross of Christ just as travelers lean on a staff when they begin a long journey. They must have the Passion of Christ deeply imbedded in their hearts, because only from it can they derive peace, grace, and truth."

-- St. Anthony of Padua

A Franciscan friar and Doctor of the Church, Anthony (also Antony) joined the order in hopes of preaching to the Saracens and possibly facing a martyr's death. Instead he became a respected teacher and gained fame for his miracles. He is a patron saint of the poor and oppressed. Many Catholics recite a short prayer to St. Anthony when they have lost something.



From the Catechism...

Liturgical seasons

1163 "Holy Mother Church believes that she should celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection. She also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed Passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts. In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ. . . . Thus recalling the mysteries of the redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present in every age; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace."

1165 When the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ, there is a word that marks her prayer: "Today!" - a word echoing the prayer her Lord taught her and the call of the Holy Spirit. This "today" of the living God which man is called to enter is "the hour" of Jesus' Passover, which reaches across and underlies all history:

Life extends over all beings and fills them with unlimited light; the Orient of orients pervades the universe, and he who was "before the daystar" and before the heavenly bodies, immortal and vast, the great Christ, shines over all beings more brightly than the sun. Therefore a day of long, eternal light is ushered in for us who believe in him, a day which is never blotted out: the mystical Passover.

The liturgical year

1168 Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor." The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time.

1169 Therefore *Easter* is not simply one feast among others, but the "Feast of feasts," the "Solemnity of solemnities," just as the Eucharist is the "Sacrament of sacraments" (the Great Sacrament). St. Athanasius calls Easter "the Great Sunday" and the Eastern Churches call Holy Week "the Great Week." The mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time, until all is subjected to him.

1170 At the Council of Nicea in 325, all the Churches agreed that Easter, the Christian Passover, should be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox. Because of the different methods of calculating the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the date of Easter in the Western and Eastern Churches is not always the same. For this reason, the Churches are currently seeking an agreement in order once again to celebrate the day of the Lord's Resurrection on a common date.

1171 In the liturgical year the various aspects of the one Paschal mystery unfold. This is also the case with the cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, Epiphany). They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal mystery.

1172 "In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably linked with the saving work of her Son. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be."

CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES



1173 When the Church keeps the memorials of martyrs and other saints during the annual cycle, she proclaims the Paschal mystery in those "who have suffered and have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs for God's favors."

Signs and symbols

1145 A sacramental celebration is woven from signs and symbols. In keeping with the divine pedagogy of salvation, their meaning is rooted in the work of creation and in human culture, specified by the events of the Old Covenant and fully revealed in the person and work of Christ.

1146 *Signs of the human world.* In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God.

1147 God speaks to man through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to man's intelligence that he can read there traces of its Creator.¹⁶ Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both his greatness and his nearness.

1151 *Signs taken up by Christ.* In his preaching the Lord Jesus often makes use of the signs of creation to make known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.¹⁷ He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures.¹⁸ He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover,¹⁹ for he himself is the meaning of all these signs.

1152 *Sacramental signs.* Since Pentecost, it is through the sacramental signs of his Church that the Holy Spirit carries on the work of sanctification. The sacraments of the Church do not abolish but purify and integrate all the richness of the signs and symbols of the cosmos and of social life. Further, they fulfill the types and figures of the Old Covenant, signify and make actively present the salvation wrought by Christ, and prefigure and anticipate the glory of heaven.

Word Wise

Lectionary	<i>the collection of scripture readings assigned by the Church for the liturgical proclamation. It includes a three year cycle of Sunday readings and a two year cycle of weekday readings.</i>
Ordinary Time	<i>the name given to the thirty-three or thirty-four weeks in the course of the year apart from Advent/Christmas and Lent/Triduum/Easter. Ordinary Time in that part of the liturgical year when no particular moment or aspect of the Christian mystery is celebrated.</i>
Solemnities	<i>celebrate events, beliefs, and personages of greatest importance and universal significance in salvation history.</i>



Feasts *celebrations of lesser significance than solemnities.*

Memorials *are of the least significance. Those important only to a local country, Church, or religious community are considered optional memorials.*

Use the space below to list questions or thoughts from reflecting on the material in these Companion Notes that you would like to share when the group meets again.

Remember to read the scripture readings for next week, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, on p. 176 in the Catechumen's Companion. Use your journal for any reflections or questions you may have about the readings.