



Ten Lepers, a Pharisee and a Publican, Saint Agnes, Zacchaeus (More than Just “Pre-Election Day” Positions)

Another Gospel passage, and another temptation to interpret Scripture solely in terms of a condemnation. If you were at Holy Mass on Sunday, 13 October 2019 (and even if you weren't) you may recall Jesus' encounter with ten lepers who **“stood at a distance from Him”**, *cried out to Him for healing, and went away (as commanded) to show themselves to the priests*. You may recall as well that *along the way it happened that one of them realizing that he had been healed returns, falls to his knees before Jesus and hears Him say: “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine?”* (cf. Saint Luke XVIII:11-19). While Jesus was certainly admonishing “the other nine”, He was not condemning them.

The Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke

This past Sunday at Holy Mass (27 October 2019), in a parable taken from Saint Luke's Gospel, Jesus identifies two men who went up to the Temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee **took up his position and spoke a prayer in which he boasted about how he was not like “the rest of humanity” and how he fasted twice a week and paid tithes on his whole income**. The tax collector meanwhile, **stood off at a distance, acknowledged he was a sinner, and asked for mercy**. At the conclusion of the Parable, Jesus tells us that the tax collector went home justified; not the Pharisee. Jesus is not condemning the Pharisee for fasting twice a week and for paying tithes on his whole income. He is admonishing him for boasting it; as one convinced of his own righteousness (cf. Saint Luke XVIII: 9–14).



These two Gospel-passages provide us with an opportunity to consider our “positions”; not only our “pre-Election Day positions” regarding issues (Religious Liberty, Marriage, Abortion, Immigration, Taxes, Climate Change, Socialism, Communism, ...), people (Madeline Singas and Francis X. McQuade (District Attorney),

Laura A. Gillen, Donald X. Clavin, Jr., and Diane Madden (Supervisor – Town of Hempstead), Sylvia A. Cabana and Kate Murray (Town Clerk – Town of Hempstead), Debra S. Mule and Daniel A. Salamone (County Legislator – Fifth Legislative District), ... and **their** positions regarding issues, positions that help determine how and for whom we will cast our **vote on Tuesday, 5 November**, but these two Gospel-passages also provide us with an opportunity to consider how we position ourselves in the Holy Presence of God.

Like the Pharisee in last Sunday's Gospel, recipients of the *Saint Agnes Medal of Service Award*, take up their appointed positions in the Church as Catechists, Lectors, Altar Guild members, ... and so much more! Unlike the Pharisee however, they do not use those positions as platforms for boasting. Rather the Church does the boasting, as it happened on 27 October 2019 when Our Holy Redeemer's morning Sacristan Mr. James Wehrum, was acknowledged by Bishop Barres for his daily attentiveness to unlocking and preparing our *absolutely beautiful church* for worship! “Thank you Jimmy!”

Mr. Wehrum joins parishioners past and present (Joann Flaherty, Charles Shields, Terri and Robert Hermann (posthumously), Cristobal Sanchez (Deacon), George Mugno (posthumously), Jane Dengel, Yolanda and Jorge Miranda, Rosa and Raul Contreras, Judy Germaine, and Artie and Albert Grover) who have been acknowledged for their positions in the Holy Presence of God. If in your position **YOU** hear His voice please: harden not your heart, and like Zacchaeus in today's Gospel, come down from that position; Jesus is calling you! (cf. Saint Luke XIX:1-10).



(PLEASE PRAY FOR VOCATIONS DURING NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK: 3 – 9 NOVEMBER)