

## **The Mercy of God: Infinite and Definite!**

On October 22, we celebrated as a Church the feast of Pope St. John Paul II. We remember this great Pope for his service to the Church, especially during his 27 years as a Pope. Also, we remember him as the Pilgrim Pope who traveled to 129 countries to encounter people and share God's love and mercy with them. In 1980, Pope John Paul II wrote an Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia (DM)*- (*God, who is rich in mercy*), in which he reflected on the richness of God's mercy and the mission of Jesus to share this mercy with us. He stated, "*Christ confers on the whole of the Old Testament tradition about God's mercy a definitive meaning. Not only does He speak of it and explain it by using comparisons and parables, but above all, He Himself makes it incarnate and personifies it.*" (DM, #2).

One of the central themes the readings of this Sunday reflect on this invitation Pope John Paul gave us to share in the richness of God's mercy, which is infinite and definite. Our first reading, the book of Wisdom (Wisdom 11:22-12:2), reminds us of God's mercy, "*But you have mercy on all because you can do all things, and you overlook people's sins that they may repent.*" Likewise, one of the lines of our Responsorial from Psalm 145 reminds us, "*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.*" Similarly, the richness of God's mercy is well depicted in the Gospel of Luke (19:1-10) through the story of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus, the Tax Collector.

We have so much to learn from the gospel story: First, Zacchaeus's desire to experience God's mercy. Thus, he strove to encounter Jesus. Second, Zacchaeus' determination to overcome all obstacles to experience the Mercy of God. Jesus recognized his efforts, encountered him, and allowed him to experience the richness of God's mercy in its fullness. Jesus, in this encounter, reminds us of his primary mission, "*For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.*" Like Zacchaeus, we all need the mercy of God to different degrees. Let us ask God for the strength to overcome the obstacles that hinder us from receiving this mercy, whether these obstacles come from our pride that makes us be in denial of our weaknesses and sinfulness or our despair that makes us give up in making efforts to receive the mercy of God and change our ways and behavior. Amen.

***Blessed Cyprain Iwene Tansi- Pray for us!***