

There was a taxidermy conference

Walking through the exhibits,

2 taxidermists came upon a display

There was an owl there

They look the owl over

And begin to do the most natural thing any human does

They begin criticizing the taxidermist

These feathers are all wrong

The feet are set at a funny angle

The eyes don't look real

The angle of the neck is all wrong

They finish their critique

As they turn to leave

The owl turns his head and winks at them

We all have our own perceptions

Prejudices

Points of view

These are reflective of our place of birth

Our education

Our experiences

We think we are right

And others are wrong

But do we ever try to see how God looks at things?

This is what our readings ask us to do today

Before the universe the whole world is like a grain

All of creation

From the tiniest molecule

To the furthest reaches of space

To God viewpoint

It is like a grain of sand

And yet, God loves all His creation

He loathes nothing He has made

Each raindrop

Each snowflake

And the pinnacle of His creation?

Mankind

Made in His image and likeness

Why did he create??

Why is there anything rather than nothing at all?

We take notice of the answer many put forth in the world

Everything is simply chance

I am here now

Tomorrow I will be gone

Back to the earth

And then there is another answer

Love

We are created in love; by love itself

None of us is here by chance

All of creation is part of a story

A story of salvation

Written by God

And each of us has our own part in this story

Like a snowflake, no 2 humans are the same

And none will ever be repeated

And nothing we can do adds one bit of glory to God

If this is our perspective

There is only one answer

And that answer is love

And in that love, it is not us who searches out for God

It is God who is searching for us

Inviting us into His dwelling of love

In communion with the Holy Trinity

Our Gospel shows us this from God's perspective

A few weeks ago we had the prodigal of the Prodigal Son

Where we saw the father looking for his younger son

Then going out to search for his older son

Today, it is not the father searching for the son

It is the sinner climbing a tree

Searching for Christ

But look closely

Who is seeking who?

We have Zacchaeus hearing something about Jesus

His curiosity gets the better of him

He goes off and climbs a tree to get a view

He is hoping to see Jesus do a cure

A miracle for another person

Jesus comes along the path

Stopping at the base of the tree looking up

Jesus calls him by name

Zacchaeus come down

Today I must stay at your house

This is beyond anything Zacchaeus would ever imagine

Jesus, calling him by name

Wanting to come and dine with him

Stay with him

Zacchaeus's entire perspective changed in an instant

And look at the crowd

They are not as quick as Zacchaeus

Like those that would have heard his parable last week

Thinking Jesus would approve of the Pharisee

Jesus challenges our presumptions again today

We have Jesus walking with the crowd

We see Zacchaeus

A chief tax collector

In one of the most prosperous cities in Israel

One would think Jesus would side with the crowd on this one

See him as a bad man

A sinner

A thief in collusion with the Roman authorities

The worst of the worst

For us today, a murderer, a child molester

But Jesus doesn't look at the externals

He looks at the heart

And in doing so

He challenges our presumptions and prejudices

To be aware of our presumptions

And to know these are not necessarily God's presumptions

God is seeking us

Jesus loves souls

He loved Zacchaeus

He loves each one of us

We want to put people into groups

Identify them by nationality

By their work or lack of work

Anything to see they are not me

But God looks at the individual

He speaks to our hearts

When he does this with Zacchaeus, what does he find?

Lord, behold

Half of my possessions I give to the poor

If I have extorted anything from anyone

I will pay it back 4-fold

Love entered Zacchaeus's heart

And in return, Zacchaeus made his offering

So how do we see God?

As an abstract idea?

A master clockmaker who set everything in motion

And sits back and watches?

Someone out there

Or do we see him as an intimate love

One who desires your love

One who is writing a book of love

Living w/in your heart and soul

We are challenged to read human life as a story of God's love

Loving us into being

Creating us

Sparing and sustaining us

To read God's story as the story of salvation history

Not for one group or another

But for individuals

Inviting us back to him

Calling us to conversion

Desiring mercy for us

So we can be His instruments of mercy to the world