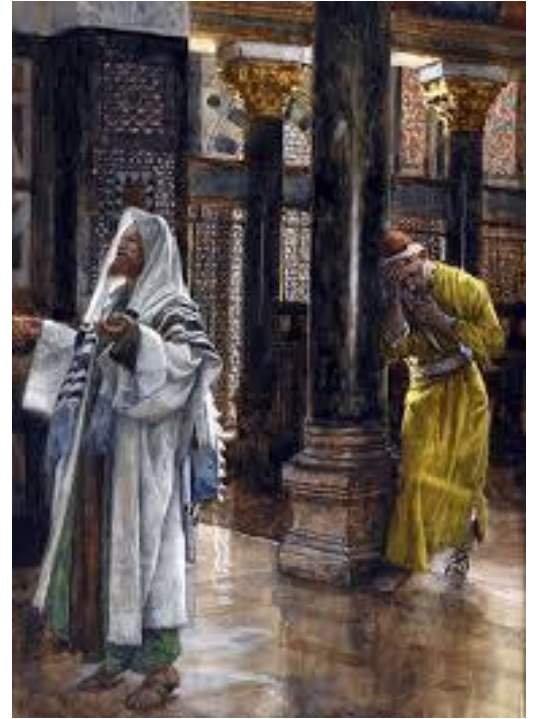




# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

## THIS SUNDAY October 23 & BEYOND

It's hard for us to appreciate just how shocking it would have been for the people of Jesus' time to hear this parable. On one hand, tax collectors were despised for basically using the occupying Roman forces to extort their fellow Jews; often collecting more than the law required and pocketing the extra. On the other hand, Pharisees were their undisputed religious leaders, the most respected members of the community. Yet, it's the tax collector Jesus praises for actually making a connection with God, the purpose of prayer, and the Pharisee who's criticized for only making a connection with himself.



When we truly connect to God, we see how unworthy we are, but also how much greater God's love and mercy is than our unworthiness. The result is not that we think less of ourselves, but that we think of ourselves less. As we're freed from our selfishness, we're better able to love God and do what he wants us to do, which is to reveal him to the world by loving our neighbor as he does. If we're only connecting to ourselves, we'll very quickly fall into self-righteousness, often without even noticing. We'll begin to see our piety and devotion, our sacrifices, even our service to others, as the signs of our goodness; and the more we notice what we do, the more we'll notice what others don't.

This can be really subtle and difficult to see in ourselves, because it's hard to gauge the quality of something until we see how well it serves its purpose, and prayer is no different. For example, I can sniff leaves, but I can't really tell how good the tea is until I add the hot water. In the same way, I can't really know how effective my prayer has been until I see what comes out in my interactions with the people around me. Do I reveal the universal love and mercy of the Father? Or am I quick to look down on those around me, take pleasure in criticizing others, and play

favorites? Do I reveal the suffering love of Jesus, praying for those who crucified him? Or am I impatient with those who let me down or don't meet my expectations, and entertain vindictive thoughts at those who get on my nerves or wound me?

If we're able to see those things in ourselves, thanks be to God – because it means that we're connecting to him. We haven't been blinded to our need for God's mercy, and so we can pray like the tax collector and be confident that he has much more to offer us.

Father McQueen II

### Readings for this Sunday

Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22 Psalm 84:1-6 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18 Luke 18:9-14

### Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)  
9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)  
10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)  
—The entrance to the church is on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue—

*Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.*

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)  
9:30a MASS (St. Mary's Chapel)  
AA Meeting 6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)  
8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)  
8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)