Body of Christ, we are all called upon to accept one another as brothers and sisters. We are all travelers on this journey, and we are all traveling together.

Zechariah 14:1-11; Psalms 140, 142; Luke 19:28-40

Saturday, November 28

Philippians 2:1-11 *Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God.* (v.6)

The very idea that God—who flung the planets to their courses, carved the mountains from the rocks and painted the wing of the butterfly—would come to us, as one of us, is incredible. Our track record was less than stellar. We disobeyed Him, we lied to Him, we ignored Him and we ran from Him.

When all the miracles of deliverance and the pleadings of the prophets had not stirred our souls to love Him, He did the unthinkable. He became one of us. Christ's life was not the life of a king or a nobleman. It was the life of an itinerant preacher with a soft spot for the outcast, the broken and the hurt. It was a life where the religious tried to trick him, neighbors threw him out of his hometown and one of his friends betrayed him to his death. This is God?

You see, God loves you and me with the same power and passion that gave the planets their courses, shaped the mountains, and tenderly fashioned the wings of the butterfly. To Him, death as a common criminal was worth the price—if it caused our hearts, at last, to accept His love.

Zechariah 14:12-21; Psalms 137, 144; Luke 19:41-48

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Good News Daily

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Sunday, November 22

Matthew 21:1-13 *He was in the center of the procession, and the crowds all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord."* (v.9 NLT)

Have you ever wondered why Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem? What kind of "Triumphal Entry" is that? Why not a horse? The disciples (being 12 strong) could easily have lifted their master on their shoulders and carried him through the streets. It seems that anything would have been better than a lowly donkey.

However, on reflection, a donkey makes perfect sense. At this time in history a horse was a luxury usually reserved for the military—for a conqueror. That is not how Jesus is pictured here.

Jesus is riding the animal of service. A donkey is not glamorous. He is not pretty in the usual sense of the word. A donkey is for carrying loads. A donkey is for shouldering burdens and providing strength to travel. This is a perfect way for the Savior to enter Jerusalem for the last time. Remember that it is only five days before his death. Through that death he will shoulder our burdens, carry the pain for our sins and provide strength for our journey. But look ahead, when he returns it will be on "a great white horse" [Revelation 19:11]. Think about the implications and rejoice!

Zechariah 9:9-16; Psalm 118; 1 Peter 3:13-22

Monday, November 23

Luke 18:15-30 *But when the man heard this, he became sad because he was very rich.* (v.23)

C. S. Lewis, the great Anglican writer and Oxford Fellow, wrote in *Mere Christianity*, "Christ says, 'Give me all. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you.'" This is precisely the point in today's passage.

The rich man was basically a good guy. He had sought to follow the law, even from a young age. His record was impressive—no adultery, no murder, no theft, no lying, and he had been good to his parents. Even by today's standards he had done all right. However, there was still something missing. It eluded him like it eludes many of us. It was an abandoned heart.

The rich man still refused to let go of what was most important to him. He had one foot on the dock and one foot on the boat. Jesus challenged him to make the leap—to choose one way or the other. That is his challenge to us. We may project a Christian image with our clean language, proper

dress, church attendance, and piety. But if we value something above Christ, it must be released. He desires all of us.

Zechariah 10:1-12; Psalm 106:1-18; Galatians 6:1-10

Tuesday, November 24

Psalm 121 T*he LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.* (v.8)

There is a pattern to psalms 121 through 123. In each of these there is a recurring idea of the provision of God. God is the "help," the one who will not let us "stumble or fall" and who "preserves your life."

Christianity in America has developed into a personal event. Often, we have a "Jesus and me" mentality. While it is true that we all have an individual relationship with Christ, it is no less true that we all exist in this life together.

These psalms are psalms of comfort. Yet they are meant to comfort so we can connect. They refresh us as they tell of how God provides for and restores us. When we are reliant and confident of God's love and grace towards us, we are free to reach out to those around us. For example, in Psalm 122 the psalmist shifts focus to the community of Jerusalem: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," "I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem." The psalmist is focusing on the community, the group.

As we come to see that God's love for us is constant and real, we too are able to focus on those around us.

Zechariah 11:4-17; Psalms 120, 122, 123; 1 Corinthians 3:10-23; Luke 18:31-43

Wednesday, November 25

Luke 19:1-10 *"Zacchaeus! Quick, come down! For I must be a guest in your home today."* (v.5)

In my weaker moments I find there are people that I'd rather not have in the kingdom of God. There are people that cause my heart to turn to stone and cause me to clinch my fists in anger. Perhaps you feel the same way about a person or group. It may be based on the way they look, or talk, or smell; or their religion, political stance, or lifestyle. This story is for us when we find those stony spots in our hearts.

Zacchaeus was a Jew working as a tax collector for Rome. This made him a sellout among his people, and he was not highly regarded. The Jews despised having to submit to Roman authority and were searching for a way out from under Roman rule. So, to be a rich Jew and a Roman tax collector did not win Zacchaeus any points in the Jewish community.

However, it is in these circumstances that Jesus enters Zacchaeus' house. The community, quite naturally, voiced their protests. They could not believe that Jesus would show favor to this man by eating with him. They thought Zacchaeus was beyond, or unworthy of, God's grace. Yet he was obviously searching for Christ (he climbed a tree just to catch a glimpse of Jesus). We must be careful not to limit God's grace only to those we like. God's grace is limitless.

Zechariah 12:1-10; Psalm 119:145-176; Ephesians 1:3-14

Thursday, November 26

Psalm 131 *But I have stilled and quieted myself, just as a small child is quiet with its mother. Yes, like a small child is my soul within me.* (v.2)

The renowned Catholic theologian, Henri Nouwen, said in his book *Out of Solitude*, "Somewhere we know that without a lonely place our lives are in danger. Somewhere we know that without silence words lose their meaning, that without listening, speaking no longer heals, that without distance closeness cannot cure."

We are resistant to quietness. We are so used to noise that we are uncomfortable in silence or solitude. Yet the words of the psalmist remind us that in silence we find refuge with God. In solitude the still, small voice of the Spirit speaks. Like a child cuddled in its mother's arms we find rest in the arms of our loving Father. There we find renewal so we can go about doing the work He has given us to do. Without it we fill our lives with activity alone, empty of the deeper meaning we long for.

Take time this week to turn away from the constant chatter of the world. Turn the TV off. Shut down the computer. Stop the music player. Put down the books. Take time simply to listen to the still, small voice of the Spirit.

Zechariah 13:1-9; Psalms 132, 133; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 19:11-27

Friday, November 27

Romans 15:7-13 *So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified.* (v.7)

There are areas of Scripture that we readily accept. It is easy for us to read that we are to come to Christ when we are "burdened and heavy laden" where we "will find rest for our souls." It is also easy for us to stomach the thought that we are "not to worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will bring its own worries."

It is much more difficult for us to apply the teaching that Paul suggests in this passage. He doesn't say tolerate. He doesn't say patronize. He says accept. Not only that, but we are to accept as Christ has accepted us—in our brokenness; in our sinfulness; in the full knowledge of the things we hide in our inmost selves—Christ accepts us as his children. He calls us his own.

This is our standard in regard to each other as well. Certainly, there will be people that we disagree with and don't understand, just as there are people who can't agree with us and find us incomprehensible. But within the