



# The Father: Symbol of the Family

*Fr. Kentenich, March 25, 1956, OME #2, 35-36.*

You see, here we have the attitude of Zacchaeus. And what did the encounter look like? We have to look into Sacred Scripture again. It is a mutual encounter. Zacchaeus climbed the tree quickly. He was not embarrassed: The people -- what will people say? I as capitalist climb the tree because of an unknown man and I want to see him, at any cost!

Thus he looks with great longing down at the Savior who comes along. And what does the Savior do? He looks up and looks at him. Two pairs of eyes are meeting. Heart and heart meet. Both have made a covenant of love with one another. And what the Savior's eyes had expressed, the mouth now also pronounced: Come down quickly from the tree because I want to be your guest today! -- And how quickly he had climbed up! -- The Savior told him: Come down quickly! I want to be your guest today.

You see, now the covenant of love is perpetuated. The Savior wants to stay with him the whole day to solidify the covenant of love with him. And the Savior knew that the people grumbled (because) he did that. It's just like today: If a capitalist does something good then rumor has it: Well he must have some scheme, his capitalistic scheme! That is not always the case, as also in this case. And now comes the great statement -- what does the Savior say? Today Salvation has come to this house! What does that mean, this house? Salvation has come to the whole family. Not only to Zacchaeus, but also to the whole house, the whole family.

Holy Scripture repeats that more often. The father directs the family, determines the attitude of the family. We see it also later, when the officer came to the Savior to ask that his son be healed. The Savior healed him, and in response, the officer believed. And because he was the father of his family who determined the attitude of the family, we read: The whole house believed with him.<sup>1</sup> What kind of encounter was it? An encounter of love between the Savior and the whole family of Zacchaeus.

And what is the blessing? What was the effect of the blessing? Afterwards the Savior went away from the family; he separated exteriorly from it. But interiorly the family remained faithful to him and the covenant. Tradition tells us that later the Apostle Paul ordained Zacchaeus a bishop.<sup>2</sup> We may assume that the whole family adhered to this same faithful attitude towards the Savior, the attitude of love. According to the biblical assumption, the father is the symbol for the whole family.

Salvation has come to this house today! What house do I mean now? It is the Horning family. Salvation has come to this house, to this family today. Because the whole family accepts the Savior today. The covenant of love with the Mother of God is ultimately a covenant of love with the Savior.

If we wish, then we may stop here and work the same points through that we have discussed earlier. We ask  
firstly about the attitude,  
secondly about the encounter, and  
thirdly about the blessing.

Well, what does the attitude look like? If the attitude of the father gives direction to the attitude of the whole family, then we have wide-ranging knowledge. Zacchaeus was wealthy. What do we find in his case? Zacchaeus was not enslaved to earthly goods. He tried to increase his wealth, but he was not enslaved by it, he did many good works. He gave half of his fortune to the poor.

The comparison is natural: How much good the family does for the poor, for the Church.<sup>3</sup> And how much the whole family keeps away from modern materialism! It does not mean that we, also as Schoenstatt children and Schoenstatt family, may not be wealthy. But we may not be enslaved, be inordinately attached to mammon, to riches. ■

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. John 4:53.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josef Schmid, Zacchaeus, in: *Lexikon für Theologie*

*uns Kirche*. Bd. 10, Freiburg 1965, Sp. 1303.

<sup>3</sup> The Horning family is meant.