Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)





Like the Rings of a Tree

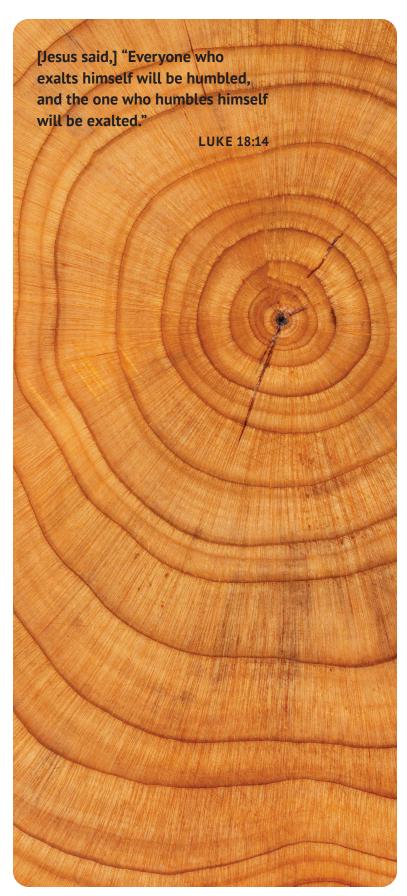
FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

or some, going to confession can bring a sense of relief—as if the slate has now been wiped clean; as if we have gotten a do-over with life or the past has been left behind as though it never happened. Our past, however, is always with us—the good and the bad, the joys and the sadness, the grace and the sin. There are no do-overs. We carry with us the marks of our lives simply because every experience, every kindness and cruelty, every moment of generosity and selfishness, all have made us into who are. We are much like a tree that adds a ring to its trunk each year. The ring always bears the marks of that year, whether it has been a year of rain or drought, whether insects have attacked, or whether Mother Nature has been kind. The tree always remembers and carries with it forever the rings of what life has been.

Our lives are the same. The story of the Pharisee and the tax collector tells this tale. Like the Pharisee, we have much good in our lives. We too have prayed and have been generous. We have been kind and honest and cared for the poor. We have tried to be faithful. The Pharisee's downfall was that he forgot about his sinfulness; he forgot he needed God's mercy. The tax collector, on the other hand, remembered his failings. Both were in need of God's love. Only the tax collector seemed to realize it.

Reflect-

How has my life been a mixture of sin and grace?



Dear Padre,

Is it wrong for children to dress up as zombies and devils and other evil creatures for Halloween?

No. It is perfectly acceptable to choose these kinds of costumes and to participate in the festivities of Halloween. Halloween is primarily a secular celebration. Although it is true that the original celebration is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, that tradition is more properly celebrated during the great feast days of the Church that follow Halloween: All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

Mythological representations, and the costumes that



remind us of these kind of characters, are to be understood with a sense of fun and mischief. There is no difference between a ghost, a goblin, a zombie, Captain America, Superman, or one of the Mario Brothers. They are all fictional characters in the very human stories we share with each other. The meaning we assign to them must be proportional to what they represent. On Halloween, they represent nothing more than a person in costume. It could be an entirely different story under different circumstances in which there might be the possibility of a misunderstanding about the meaning of such a costume. Halloween pretty much blurs that distinction and takes away the misunderstanding. It is meant to be entertaining and fun. That is all. •

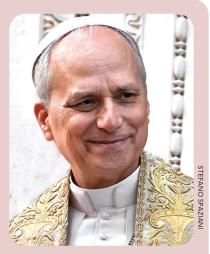
Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to **DearPadre.org** to send your question and to learn more about **Dear Padre**.

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

My own story is that of a citizen, the descendant of immigrants, who in turn chose to emigrate. All of us, in the course of our lives, can find



ourselves healthy or sick, employed or unemployed, living in our native land or in a foreign country, yet our dignity always remains unchanged: it is the dignity of a creature willed and loved by God.

AUDIENCE OF THE HOLY FATHER, ROME, MAY 16, 2025

Monday

October 27 *Weekday* Rom 8:12–17 Lk 13:10–17

Tuesday

October 28 Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles Eph 2:19–22 Lk 6:12–16

Wednesday

October 29

Weekday

Rom 8:26–30

Lk 13:22–30

Thursday

October 30 *Weekday* Rom 8:31b-39 Lk 13:31-35

Friday

October 31 Weekday Rom 9:1–5 Lk 14:1–6

Saturday

November 1 All Saints Rv 7:2-4, 9-14 1 Jn 3:1-3 Mt 5:1-12a

Sunday

November 2
The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)
Wis 3:1–9
Rom 5:5–11 or Rom 6:3–9
Jn 6:37–40

(These readings or any from no. 668 or from the Masses for the Dead)

