

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Patience and Mercy

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
you rescued your people and led them
to a land of milk and honey.
Throughout history,
you have patiently allowed your people
time to repent.

May we be grateful for your mercy
and regard this season of Lent
as a time to be cultivated in your ways
so that we may bear fruit in the future.
We look to your Word
to guide us on our journey
as we seek to know your will.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

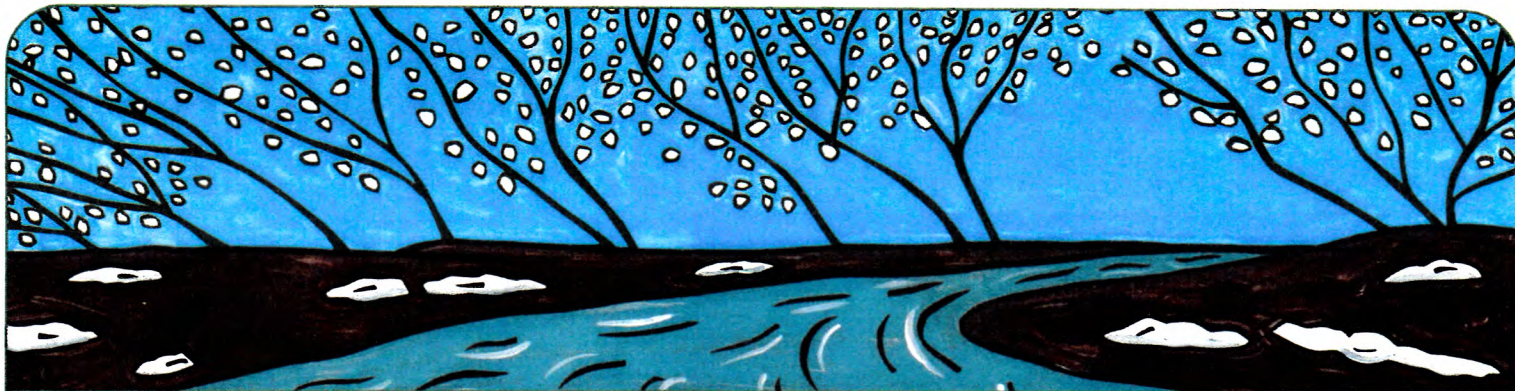
Sunday, March 24, 2019

Repentance

Today's Readings: Exodus 3:1–8, 13–15; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8–11; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 10–12; Luke 13:1–9.
The word “repent” is usually equated with being sorry or seeking forgiveness. During Jesus’ time on earth, people would understand repentance to mean a change of life, a total transformation. Change is difficult, even when it is small.

In today’s Gospel, we hear a parable about a fig tree that has produced no fruit during three years. Now the time has run out, and the owner wants to cut the tree down. However, the gardener requests that he be allowed to care for the fig tree for one year, cultivating the ground and fertilizing it, so that it will bear fruit in the future.

During Lent, we pray and fast so that we can live out our life in Christ better. These forty days offer an opportunity to reexamine our lives and to seek what God desires of us. This is our chance to be fertilized and cultivated in God’s ways so that we can bear fruit in the future. How are you making small changes in your life so that God can transform you? Are there habits of prayer or reading Scripture that you are trying to form? How can you integrate these habits into your life even after Lent? Take some time today to reflect on what in your life is in need of repentance. Remember, Lent will soon be half over.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 25

Handmaid of the Lord

Mary responds to the angel Gabriel, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word.” In describing herself as the handmaid of the Lord, Mary is claiming her role as a humble servant before God. Mary models for us how we are to respond to God, with a humble heart that is ready to assist and to serve. How can you surrender yourself to God’s will? How are you called this week to be of service to others? *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 7:10–14; Psalm 40:7–8, 8–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*

Tuesday, March 26

Forgive from Your Heart

Do you find forgiveness to be difficult in your life? Is it easier for you to ask for forgiveness or to be the one who offers pardon to another who has wronged you? Forgiveness can lead to healing and peace. This is our hope: to be restored to one another and to God. Find out when your parish community is offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation and plan to attend. *Today’s Readings: Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; Matthew 18:21–35.*

Wednesday, March 27

Fulfillment of the Law

The law and the prophets were guides for the Chosen People. Jesus comes to fulfill the law, and the law he shares is the law of love. When it comes to living our faith, we must do so with a sincere heart. How often do you do something because it is required? Today strive to lift up one of your obligatory tasks and embrace it with a new heart of love and humility for the Lord. *Today’s Readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 28

Unfair Judgment

Those who witness Jesus casting out a demon were amazed, but they also were skeptical about the source of his power and even tried to test him by demanding a sign from heaven. Have you ever been in a situation in which there seemed to be no good options to take? Have you ever been judged unfairly? Jesus invites us to follow him and in doing so, we need to pray for one another. It can be difficult to pray for those who are unkind and causing division. Ask God to heal them and for the courage to follow Jesus. *Today’s Readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 29

Loving God

Jesus summarized the Commandments into loving God completely and loving neighbor as ourselves. Do you find it more difficult to love God or others? What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength? How will you show your love of God today? *Today’s Readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6–8, 10–11, 14, 17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 30

Right Attitude

Through a parable about two men praying in the Temple, Jesus calls us to a right attitude of ourselves before God and others. The posture, gestures, and words of the two men reveal much about their relationship with the Lord. Which man’s life was changed because of his prayer that day? Do you open yourself to be changed through prayer? As you continue to journey through Lent, consider a new prayer form, such as journaling, centering prayer, or adoration, to enrich your relationship with God. *Today’s Readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21; Luke 18:9–14.*

