

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

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In the Gospel, today, the listeners of Jesus were told of the gruesome murder of Galileans by Pilate. They believed that they experienced an awful death because of their sinful life. However, Jesus expressed that He refused to see the link between misfortune and sinfulness as the Jews are accustomed to do. On the other hand, from the perspective of Jesus, the recounted event was an occasion to point out the vulnerability and transience of life: that the death of the Galileans was also an invitation for repentance. Jesus called the attention of people to ponder about the finiteness of life, and the necessity for personal conversion: to produce and bear fruit through repentance. Being struck with “Bad Luck” is not due to sinfulness. Jesus then teaches the difference between bad luck and sinfulness through the parable of the fig tree.

Sinfulness is not being ready to accept the word of God; the manure of the life and not making any endeavour to grow when conditions and suitable occasions for growth are present. Extra care and opportunities have been given. The only thing a tree has to do is to make use of available and additional chances.

We all celebrate our birthday every year. Whenever our birthday comes around, we can also reflect on how much fruit we have produced in our lives in the past year: fruits of our goodness that we bear and share with our brothers and sisters. When we wake up in the morning, if everyone is able to think in the following manner; that we have been gifted with one more day to live a life to do some good, how beautiful the world would be?

St. Paul teaches us how to be fertile in our Christian life: that is, by drinking from the spiritual rock, Jesus Christ. Let us reflect on ourselves: are we rooted in Jesus, the living water, or are we trying to get water from empty wells? In the book of Jeremiah 2:13, the word of God says: “... for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.” Jesus was among them as the living water, the manure for their lives, and the light for their energy. All they had to do was to accept Him. This can only happen fully through repentance, by turning to God and working to bear good fruit. In the Gospel according to St. Mathew chapter 3: 8 we read, “Bear fruit worthy of repentance.”

When Saint Luke wrote his Gospel passage, he had in mind, the Lukan community, especially the lukewarm Christians to show that the need to be open to Jesus and his teaching will chase away infertility in their actions, and lack of dedication to their faith. Jesus is represented as the man who cares for the fig tree; showing that God’s mercy is above judgement. Saint Luke invites all the faithful to listen attentively and to be open to the Gospel: to be receptive and to renew life by bearing good fruits.

