

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday March 19th for the third Sunday of Lent

OPENING PRAYER: Liberating God, thank you for gathering us together as your people to share life and your Word. Just as you revealed yourself to Moses, reveal yourself to us as we listen to your Word. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Luke 13:1-9

A Call to Repentance.*

1 At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate* had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.

2 He said to them in reply, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?^a

3 By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent,^b you will all perish as they did!

4 Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them*—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem?

5 By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.*

6^c And he told them this parable: “There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none,

7 he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’

8 He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;

9 it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.’”

Notes

* [13:1–5] The death of the Galileans at the hands of Pilate (Lk 13:1) and the accidental death of those on whom the tower fell (Lk 13:4) are presented by the Lucan Jesus as timely reminders of the need for all to repent, for the victims of these tragedies should not be considered outstanding sinners who were singled out for punishment.

* [13:1] The slaughter of the Galileans by Pilate is unknown outside Luke; but from what is known about Pilate from the Jewish historian Josephus, such a slaughter would be in keeping with the character of Pilate. Josephus reports that Pilate had disrupted a religious gathering of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim with a slaughter of the participants (*Antiquities* 18:86–87), and that on another occasion Pilate had killed many Jews who had opposed him when he appropriated money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct in Jerusalem (*Jewish War* 2:175–77; *Antiquities* 18:60–62).

* [13:4] Like the incident mentioned in Lk 13:1 nothing of this accident in Jerusalem is known outside Luke and the New Testament.

* [13:6–9] Following on the call to repentance in Lk 13:1–5, the parable of the barren fig tree presents a story about the continuing patience of God with those who have not yet given evidence of their repentance (see Lk 3:8). The parable may also be alluding to the delay of the end time, when

punishment will be meted out, and the importance of preparing for the end of the age because the delay will not be permanent (Lk 13:8–9).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. “He came looking for fruit but found none.” What kind of fruit do you think Jesus expects disciples to bear? Share one example of “fruit” that you seek to bear daily.
2. The Gospel is a clear call to repentance “lest we perish”. What can help you to see what conversion may still be needed in your life?

Commentary

Today’s Gospel makes reference to two disasters which the people ask Jesus to comment on. They seem to believe that bad things have befallen the victims because they are sinners. The absence of bad things in the questioners’ lives implies that they are righteous and not in need of repentance. Jesus quickly sets his questioners straight on this issue: “Bad things didn’t happen to the victims in either incident because they were unrighteous or bad people. And the absence of bad things in your lives does not mean that you are not in need of repentance. Indeed you are.” Jesus admonishes them: “You are all in need of repentance and if you do not repent, you will perish.” The unrepentant will suffer a fate worse than the victims of the disaster. Jesus uses the two terrible events as a metaphor for the catastrophic ending that awaits those who refuse to repent. Jesus is saying that the big tragedy in life is not being abused or killed accidentally. Rather, true tragedy rests in the hearts of each of us and our choice to reject God’s call to repentance and change of heart. Jesus exhorts his audience (and us) to not be preoccupied with why bad things happen to people, but rather to be concerned about the condition of their own soul. It is indeed tragic when a person is killed, but for Jesus, there is no tragedy worse than a mind and heart closed to God. No one can afford to be spiritually complacent. In Jesus’ parable of the Fig Tree, sometimes called “The Parable of the Second Chance,” the owner, noticing that his fig tree is not bearing any fruit, wants to cut it down. The vinedresser asks that it be given one more chance: “Sir, leave it for another year.” The fig tree represents Israel; the Vinedresser represents God. Just as the gardener is patient with the fig tree, so is God patient with sinners. In his youth, Moses kills a man

but God does not write him off. God sees immense potential in this former murderer and calls him to carry out a great mission. Church history is full of examples of barren fig trees that, in time, became fruitful, e.g., Paul, Augustine, and Thomas Merton. However, the parable also makes it clear that time may run out on the unrepentant. If people refuse chance after chance to turn their lives around, God will not quit on them, but they will, by deliberate choice, shut themselves out of God's Kingdom. This parable calls us to be fruitful trees in God's vineyard.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, March 19 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: March 19, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQT09>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607

