

## Third Sunday of Lent by Father Dave -

(Exodus 3: 1 – 8, 13 – 15; 1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 6, 10 – 12;

Luke 13: 1 – 9)

When was our last religion class? Was it the last week before we finished grade school or graduated from High School? When was the last time we took a class on Scripture? When was the last time we went to a talk speaking about spirituality, or when was the last time we read a book about a saint?

Today's Gospel is a warning. Jesus, referring to the people whom Pilate had executed and to others killed in a construction accident, said, "If you do not repent, you will all perish as they did." Repentance is "to change from the inside, / to change the way we think and act and get more in line with the ways that Jesus taught and lived." Jesus, obviously, was exasperated by those who had not continued to grow and understand better Who God is.

Various people approached their priest at the end of an evening adult education class with questions about one of the papal encyclicals. An obviously distraught individual, who was a "born and raised" Catholic, shouldered through the group and finally blurted out, "It's too hard to be Catholic anymore!" The man remembered the Church prior to the Vatican Council in the 1960's and said that he longed for the days when you could learn everything you needed to know about the Church by memorizing the questions in the *Baltimore Catechism*.

This man is not alone. It does seem that there was a time when being a Catholic was easier, when rules seemed better spelled out and the roles more clearly delineated, but being a member of the Church is not solely about memorizing rules and fulfilling requirements. Being a member of the Church is about taking a spiritual journey – growing in our relationship with God. When it comes to learning about God, the journey lasts through our lifetime – or so it should.

While there were many good things about the "good ol' days," the method of educating in faith too often reduced the practice of faith to things such as getting to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, keeping the fasts, supporting the Parish, making it to the novenas and the Stations, etc. We took comfort in fulfilling "the rules." Simply keeping "the rules" is not going to gain us salvation. Only a real sense of repentance can do that.

Jesus faced people who believed that those who were killed died as a result of not keeping the rules, as if their deaths were their own fault. Jesus, quite undone with this attitude, made clear to His audience that, unless they reformed – that is, begin to have a change of heart and take a different approach to their faith – they would meet the same end.

The Season of Lent challenges you and me to examine our approach to God. To come to know God better implies that we are asking questions and learning. Luke gives us today's story because his readers were content with what

they knew of God. The words of Jesus are a warning that, if we ever let ourselves believe that we need to do no more or learn no more, then our deaths might be as meaningless as those to whom Jesus refers. We must continually be reforming our lives. This means – continual learning.

Then, Luke gives us the parable about the fig tree. The owner had grown tired of the tree that was not bearing fruit, but when the owner was begged by the vinedresser – the tree was given a little more time. A little more tilling, pruning and fertilizing would help. Are we doing the same thing for our faith? We might want to watch our available time.

The Season of Lent reminds us that time is short. God is patient, and He is willing to help us grow and mature, but He expects us to bear fruit. This whole chapter of Luke presents two sides of God. On the one hand He is a judge Who will not hesitate to destroy the barren fig tree. On the other hand, God is the giver of grace. The Father will help us grow, but God remains the Judge Who has high expectations.

Jesus warns us not to compare ourselves to others because salvation is based on repentance – reformation – and not on self-satisfaction that we know everything we should know. Self-satisfaction is a sure path to destruction. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied. We must grow, mature and bear fruit for God.

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World  
& for Peace

### How to Change the World

*A devout and holy rabbi once said, "In my youth, fired with the love of God, I thought I would convert the whole world. But soon I learned it would be quite enough to convert the people who lived in my village. I tried that for a long time, but I was unsuccessful. Then I realized that my program was still too ambitious, so I concentrated on reforming the members of my own household. But I couldn't convert them either. Finally It dawned on me that I must work only upon myself. But I have stumbled in my attempts to accomplish even that."*

This story reminds us of who should be the subject of our reform during this Season of Lent. While the world is filled with great injustices, and there are endless lists of causes that we might take up – from "Ban the Bomb" to "Save the Whales" – let us begin to reform the world by a serious attempt to reform ourselves first. The world will find itself being changed at the speed of each personal conversion.

## BULLETIN REFLECTION

by Father Rody

MARCH 20 2022, 3<sup>RD</sup> SUN LENT YR C...LK 13, 1-9

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*ASH WEDNESDAY... 'Repent and believe in the Gospel.'*

That is one of the formulas we used to start the season of Lent. On lent, we need to remember two things; 1. Our sinfulness and 2. Our Savior. How are we to approach REPENTANCE?

\*\*\*By way of analogy, *let me use the prodigal son (LK 15, 11-32)*

-1. The first step of Repentance is REALIZATION

17 Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. 18 I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

Realization is man's response to God's initiative (I am waiting for you to comeback).

-2. The second step is put into ACTION that realization

20 So he got up and went back to his father...

21His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

Mankind's mindset sometimes is very good in theories/planning/dreaming but not in action. If you are really sincere with your repentance step forward and actualize it. Just like faith, it is not a concept rather an action...

James 2, 17 So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 Indeed someone may say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

-3. The third step is GOD'S RESPONSE

20...While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

22 But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast,

24 because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

No matter how sinful mankind is that does not matter to God. What matters to God is 'mankind admit and be sorry.'

*Repent so as not to perish but to enjoy the fullness of life-God's greatest gift.*

March 19...*St. Joseph, husband of Mama Mary...Pray for us.*