

Lent 3 Year C

Readings: *Isaiah 55:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9, Psalm 63:1-8*

Theme: *The Gospel of the second chance*

"Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I did around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down"

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Amen.

My dear friends, our journey is now in the third week. How are we doing? If the Lord calls us today, what account are we going to give about our activities? How charitable have we been in words and deeds; Lent is a time to think of ourselves less and think of others.

This time of the Christian year is such a precious time that we can't afford to let it pass without making full use of it.

In the first reading this morning, we hear God inviting his people to come to him and receive gifts that are freely given. He says "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near" He goes on to ask the wicked to forsake their ways.

In the second reading Paul in an address to the people of Corinth reminds them of the deeds of our ancestors. Those who did not have the privilege of having what we have in the place of Jesus. He asked them to remember who they are and act accordingly. He asked them not to indulge in any immoral act and in we must not put Christ to test. He asked them to stand tall and be watchful at all times.

In the Gospel, Jesus used the massacre of the Galileans to put across a strong message.

The story of the fig tree gives us a heartening glimpse into the mind of God who patiently watches as we mess up our lives. He continues to have confidence in us long after we have lost faith in ourselves. With the best will in the world, we cannot through a day without making mistakes in our work, without falling foul of people and failing to recognise goodness and give credit where credit is due. Lent is a grace filled time to take stock of our lives, recognise our shortcomings and avail ourselves of the opportunity of the season to start again.

In Palestine of the gospels there was an abundance of fig-trees which were renowned for the fruit they produced. In today's parable, when the owner came looking for fruit, he was naturally disappointed and concluded the tree was only depleting the soul and would never bear fruit. However, he was prevailed upon to

give it one more chance and leave it for another year We have been given a patch of land to cultivate and ample opportunity to bear fruit. Like the fig tree we are prone to failure and do not always produce what is demanded of us. The expectation is to redeem ourselves by producing the fruits of good living wherever we find ourselves

On judgement day when we come face to face with God, we will be invited to account of our stewardship and asked how well we fulfilled our charge on earth.

Let us meditate on these points.

The Intercessions

Confident of his constant and supportive presence within us we now make our prayers to the Lord who is slow to anger and rich in his mercy.

Your response is:

Lord graciously hear us

- 1 We pray for the church worldwide especially the Anglican communion that the differences that in our understanding of the bible be not an obstacle to promoting the message of Christ which is its main reason for existence
-Lord hear us

Response:

- 2 We pray for Gregor our bishop, for the clergy, and all who exercise authority in the church that they may proclaim the truth with courage and be kind and merciful towards all whom they serve

Lord, Hear us

Response:

- 3 For all whose lives are empty of good deeds, may they produce fruits of patience, generosity and peace *-Lord hear us*

Response:

- 4 We pray for ourselves that our hearts might be renewed by a deep conversion this Lent *-Lord hear us*
- 5 We ask the Lord to bless our sick friends especially those members of our congregation who are recovering from an illness. May they receive the healing power of Christ through the care and concern of those around them
- 6 We pray for those who have died recently, may God take them to himself and may they live
In his presence for ever

Lord our God, heal our ills, forgive our sins and help us to realise your goodness towards us, Crown us with your love and compassion so that we may live our lives so that we may live our lives for you.

Merciful Father accept