

Lent 3 Year C

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

Theme: *Turn To God*

(Turn to God and accept his forgiveness while there is time)

"No, I tell you, unless you repent, you will all perish as they did."

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

My dear friends, while the above quotation seems harsh. On this third Sunday of Lent, the church invites us to review our Lenten resolution which is repentance.

Today, we as the followers of Christ we are urged to stop squandering the opportunities offered to us lest it be lost forever. Even if we don't believe in God and the Gospel, we don't need anyone to tell us that our time on earth is limited and the opportunity to repent will come to an end with death.

Depressing as it may sound, this is the case until we find a cure for mortality for some will like to live forever forgetting that if human beings live forever, we wouldn't be here today. As of now, we know we are all gradually heading towards the end of our tenure on earth. That said, what help do the readings of today give us?

In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, God speaking through the prophet calls on his people to come to him just as they are He knows their weaknesses and strengths. He urges them to seek Him when he is still to be found. They are summoned to return to their God for with him is life in all fullness.

There is a promise to the people and it demands a response. They must take advantage of this moment of opportunity - Does this say anything to us at this time?

In the Epistle, Paul in his letter to the Corinthians warns about the dangers of over confidence on the part of some Corinthian Christians. These are people who think they cannot be tempted or that they are solid enough since they have been baptised in Jesus. They think they can do no wrong. Paul is asking that they be on their guard.

To everyone, a temptation must come. It is part of being human. There must always be times when we as human beings will be tempted. We would be better for it if we recognise it as part of whom and what we are. That is why it is good to be on our guard especially at this time. What a privilege to have!

In the Gospel, the exact circumstances that Jesus referred to, is not known. It is however believed that Pilate had ordered the massacre of those Jews who were protesting about his interference with the temple money which he wanted to appropriate for his project.

He goes on to tell the parable of the fig tree:

The fig tree in the story had a privileged position. It occupied a particularly favourable position. It had every opportunity to produce fruits but it didn't. It had more than an average chance but it never proved worthy of it. It was taking more and more from the soil without giving anything in return. There are those who take more out of society than they put in and there are those who put in more than they take out. Virtue is in the middle which is to say, striking a balance.

Everyone alive owes something to someone and to society. We would not be able to survive without the sacrifice of someone or others who loved and cared for us. We on our part must love and care for others. We inherited a Christian tradition for that we are grateful. It is our Christian duty to make the world a better place. What we inherited we did not inherit because of any effort on our part but because of the free gift of God. What did you do to deserve being where you are and who you are today? Why are you British and not an Australian or any other nationality? Some among us may come up with all sorts of explanation but we are well aware that none of these is our own making. You did not choose to be who you are, your height, your life span and more.

It is then our Christian duty to make the world a better place than we found it. Abraham Lincoln once said "I want it to be said when I die, that I plucked a weed and planted a flower where I thought a flower will grow."

Today, Jesus is warning you and I that we would be judged according to the opportunities we have been given.

We find ourselves in all sorts of jobs and in sorts of situations where we can make things better. How do we react?

Never was a generation entrusted with so much and therefore never was a generation more answerable to God. We have the power to make the world a better place, let us get on with it.

Uselessness invites disaster. Nothing which only takes out can survive. The sin of the fig tree was that it was drawing strength and sustenance from the soil and in return was producing nothing. The most searching question we can be asked is: 'Of what use were you in the world?' The message that comes clear today is that we must produce good works which must be pleasing to God.

Many a time, it is not what we do wrong but what we leave undone that prevents us growing in the love of Christ.

The Lenten invitation to repentance is not merely a call to turn away from sin or evil but a plea to produce seeds of good living.

It is Jesus' way to give human beings a second chance. God is infinitely kind to someone who falls and rises. Our faces may be filled with broken commandments and our hearts with sins as dark as the night still we must not hesitate to come to God. From the Gospel, however, we know there is always the last chance. It is taken for granted that we don't spurn the opportunity we have been given. The church seasons provide these opportunities for us.

Many a time our pride and our traditions stand on the way. Yes, many a time you may be shunned. Your good works may even be ridiculed or go unappreciated. When these happen, rejoice for your reward is great.

If we all do a little, the world will be a better place. With these in mind, let us continue our celebration.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.