

Reflection for the 3rd Sunday of Lent

For the first two Sundays of Lent the Gospel Reading is always the same every year. On the First Sunday of Lent, we have the Gospel Reading of the Temptation of Jesus after He spent forty days and forty nights in the desert with no food. Then the Second Sunday of Lent, it is the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. These two Sunday of Lent having the same Gospel Readings every year provide us with a foundation and starting point for our Lenten Journey and for our Journey of Faith.

Well today we enter the Third Sunday of Lent and two years ago our Gospel Reading was the woman at the well. In this Gospel Reading we hear of Jesus speaking with a Samaritan woman and through this conversation the woman is forgiven of her sins and embraces a relationship with God. Last year our Gospel Reading on the Third Sunday of Lent shares with us the account of Jesus driving out the merchants and money lenders from the Temple area. This Gospel Reading reminds us of the singular purpose that Churches have which is to provide us with a place to worship and communicate with the one true God.

Today in our Gospel reading taken from the Gospel of Luke 13: 1-5, we hear of two terrible events that had happened one is the tower of Siloam falling, killing 18 people. The second is the massacre that happened in the Temple area by the Roman Legions. There are tragedies that happen in every time and place be it in the time of Christ or in our own time, be it close to home or in a distant land. We can think of the tragedies that have happened in our day and time ranging from the fires in California, South Carolina and recent weather events. We can see how we in our day and time react, with prayers, and support not only for the victims and their families but also for the first responders and the rescuers. It is terrible that tragedies happen in this world, but it is a blessing to see when these terrible events happen that people reach out in a loving and caring way to those in need. We also see that as we move forward from the tragedy, be it local or national officials or the public at large, we wonder how this type of tragedy could be prevented in the future. But may we also allow the tragedies that we experience to draw us closer to God and to become more reliant on Him.

In our Gospel Reading this Sunday we have a parable about the fig tree and how the gardener convinces the orchard owner to wait another year, before he cuts down the fig tree that is not producing fruit. Just as the fig tree is expected to bear fruit so we as children of God are expected to share the Gospel message in this world and make a positive difference. But just as the fig tree was given another chance, we too are given another chance every day to be the person that God has created us to be. The gardener did not just leave the fig tree to find a way to produce fruit on its own; the gardener was there providing support for the fig tree by cultivating the ground and fertilizing the soil. Our gardener is Jesus Christ, who has cultivated the ground by His 33 years here in this world showing us the way to His Father the owner of the orchard. Jesus Christ also fertilized the soil of our hearts by the shedding of His blood as He gave His life for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

The message we receive this Sunday from our Gospel Reading of Jesus as the gardener, who is here to help us can also be found as a message in the Gospel account of the woman at the well and Jesus in the Temple area driving out the merchants and money lenders. Jesus in these three Gospel Readings is reaching out to help humanity live a life in harmony with God the Father. In closing it is terrible to see tragedies happen in the world, may we do our part to respond to these terrible events, reaching out in prayer and action. May we also embrace the opportunity each day to grow and become the people God has created us to be.