

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Hello Dear Girls and Boys,

March 20, 2022, marks the Third Sunday of Lent, the middle of Lent, as we prepare for the coming of Easter. Lent is the Church's time to get us ready with some special preparations and sacrifices for the glorious resurrection of our Lord from the descension to hell. Just think of what you have to do, when you go to an important birthday party or a special affair. First, you have to plan what to wear and then, also what to bring. It may not always be easy or according to what you would rather do, but you know it is important. Well, here we are getting ready for the coming of Jesus after His resurrection. We want to show Him that we are willing to prepare ourselves by giving up something that will be a sacrifice, like our favorite candy or doing some chores, which would help someone in the family or be extra nice to a sibling, not argue and say something nice. It will take an extra effort, but God can see your spirit to do something special for Him.

The first reading (**Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15** This is what you must say to the children of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.) is from the book of Exodus. That book tells the story of the people of Israel and how they were freed from slavery in Egypt because the Lord felt sorry for them. Moses had tried to convince the Pharaoh to free the Israelites.

One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, who was the priest of Midian.

Moses led the sheep along the edge of the desert to Sinai, the mountain of God.

Suddenly the Lord's angel appeared to him from a burning bush.

Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up.

He said to himself, "This is strange!

I'll go over and see why the bush is not burning up."

When the LORD saw Moses coming near the bush, He called out to him.

Moses answered, "Lord, here I am."

God replied, "Don't come any closer.

Take off your sandals, because the ground where you are standing is holy.

I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Moses was too afraid to look at God, and he hid his face.

The Lord said,” I have seen how my people are suffering in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out to me because of those slave bosses. I am sorry for them, and so I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians.

I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land and plenty of milk and honey.”

Moses answered, “ I will tell the people of Israel that the God of their ancestors has sent me to them.

But what should I say, if they ask me who you are?”

God said to Moses. “I am who I am.

So tell them that the one whose name is ‘I AM’ has sent you.

Say that the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has sent you to them.

This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on.”

The word of the Lord.

After reading this conversation between Moses and our Lord, you can tell that the Lord was very definite in what He said to Moses, and He answered all his questions. God left no doubt that He is the same God as the one from the ancestors of Moses. These words have been passed down to us, so that we have no doubt, that the words come from our God. We, too, have to listen to the word of the Lord and follow what He requests of us. So let’s see how we can prepare ourselves during Lent to show God that we are eager to follow his requests. We can make small changes in our lives: clean up our room without being told, help with the dishes, clear the table, surprise our family members with some extra hugs, and pray an extra Hail Mary at night. These

acts do not have to be big sacrifices, but they should show a willingness to become a little better than we are right. Now.

The responsorial Psalm (**Psalm 103:1-2, 6-7,8 and 11**) tells us how kind and wonderful the Lord has been to us and we should not forget that we need to thank Him and praise Him.

R/: The Lord is kind and merciful.

**With all my heart
I praise the LORD,
and with all that I am
I praise his holy name!
With all my heart
I praise the LORD!
I will never forget
how kind he has been.**

R/: The Lord is kind and merciful.

**For all who are mistreated,
the LORD brings justice.
He taught his Law to Moses
and showed all Israel
what he could do.**

R/: The Lord is kind and merciful.

**The Lord is merciful!
He is kind and patient,
and his love never fails.
How great is God's love for all
who worship him?
Greater than the distance
between heaven and earth!**

R/:The Lord is kind and merciful!

You have read the word “merciful” now a lot of times. Do you know what it means?

Mercy stands for compassion, a feeling of kindness towards another person, and also for forgiveness. That is called merciful and repeatedly we are told that God is merciful. Can we try to imitate God’s mercy toward our family members or friends? We certainly can try, especially now in Lent. We can make a promise to ourselves, that at least once a day we can make a little sacrifice as an offering to God during this time. Let us put others first.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL (**Matthew 4:17**)

R/: Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Repent, says the Lord;
the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

R/: Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Today’s gospel (**Luke 13:6-9**) is in the form of a parable that was written for us by Luke. A *parable* tries to teach a moral or spiritual lesson. Jesus often presented his messages in this form, because they were easy to understand and the people of his time were able to follow the teachings.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

Jesus told the people this story:

“A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. One day he went out to pick some figs, but he didn’t find any. So he said to the gardener, ‘For three years I have come looking for figs on this tree, and I haven’t found any yet. Chop it down! Why should it take up space?’

“The gardener answered, ‘Master, leave it for another year. I’ll dig around it and put some manure on it to make it grow. Maybe it will have figs on it next year. If it doesn’t, you can have it cut down.’ “

The gospel of the Lord.

Did you understand what Jesus tried to teach his followers in the gospel here? Who is the gardener who cares for the tree? If you have said 'Jesus', you were right. Jesus cares for us, provides us with his blessings and we need his care to grow and flourish. Some of us, however, ignore the rules (the Ten Commandments) he has given us as guidelines, and we do not say our prayers, or we do not respect our parents or elders, and like the tree, we have not produced the fruits (the good deeds) that were expected of us. We did not grow in the love of Christ. However, and here is the wonderful part of this parable, we all get another chance (like the tree, another year to grow). Jesus always takes us back into his arms, forgives us and we are welcome to grow with him as our patient gardener wants us to do. That is the message that Jesus wanted the people to hear and understand his teachings. And Lent is now the period in which we can do our sacrifices and grow.

Third Sunday of Lent, 2022
Barbara Oberding

Now let's take a minute and see how much you remember from today's readings. Here are a few questions to test yourself:

1. How can we prepare ourselves in Lent for the coming of Easter?
2. Why did God tell Moses not to come closer to the burning bush?
3. In the First Reading, why did the Lord want to bring his people out of Egypt?
4. What does the word 'merciful' mean?
5. Why did Jesus use parables to talk to the people of his time?

ANSWERS

1. How can we prepare ourselves in Lent for the coming of Easter? Ans: We can make little sacrifices, like helping our family or say some extra prayers.
2. Why did God tell Moses not to come closer to the burning bush? Ans: The ground where the bush was burning was holy ground.
3. In the First Reading, why did the Lord want to bring his people out of Egypt? Ans: His people were suffering under the rule of the slave bosses.
4. What does the word 'merciful' mean? Ans: It means to be kind and loving towards others.
5. Why did Jesus use parables to talk to people of his time? Ans: The parables were easy to understand.