

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We began our Lenten Journey with a cross traced in ashes on the foreheads of all who came to Church on Ash Wednesday as a declaration of the necessity of repentance, of change of heart and of faithfulness to the Gospel values. On the first Sunday of Lent, we met Jesus in the desert being tempted, rising above them and choosing to remain faithful to the Father's plan for him. On the second Sunday, we met Jesus on the mountain being transfigured, proclaimed the beloved son of God and choosing to continue the journey to Jerusalem to face the judgment, the cross and eventual death and calling all disciples to be faithful – steadfast – on the journey.

Today, on the third Sunday of Lent, we meet Jesus being tested again as he continued his journey to Jerusalem. Jesus has been talking to his followers about making changes to their lifestyle while there was still time. He told them to be vigilant, to read the signs of the times and make the necessary changes in their lives (Luke 12: 54-59). It was in this context that some men raised the question about the tragedy of the Galileans (today's Gospel reading). Galileans were inclined to get into political struggles. They were inflammable people. Pilate had decided that Jerusalem needed new and improved water supply. He proposed to use the temple money for this purpose, to construct his aqueduct. The Jews were offended by the idea of using temple money for any purpose other than the needs of the temple.

When the mobs gathered in protest, Pilate instructed his soldiers to mingle with them wearing cloaks over their battle dress for disguise. They were instructed to carry cudgels rather than swords. At a given signal, they were to jump on the mob and disperse them. But the soldiers did more than expected. Many shed their blood, and many lost their lives. It is their blood that got mingled with their sacrifices. The second incident mentioned in this excerpt is about the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell. Some men had taken up work on Pilate's hated aqueduct. They were getting paid from the temple money. They were killed when the tower collapsed. Their death was interpreted as the result of sin because they were taking temple money as their payment.

The Jews have rigidly connected sin and suffering. In the Gospel reading of today, we hear Jesus addressing the questions about the connection between sin and suffering. He referred to the two tragic events described above, which his listeners were familiar with. The first was malicious and the second was an unforeseen accident, neither was the result of the sin of the victims. Jesus used these events to explain that there is no direct connection between sin and

suffering. Jesus used these events also to show that death comes sudden, unexpected and without warning and without giving the victims an opportunity to prepare for their death. Anyone could meet with sudden death like those victims of the tragedies mentioned. So, we must be prepared and ready, repent and reform and change our ways and align our ways to God's ways.

In the second reading of today's mass (1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12), we hear St. Paul reminding the Corinthians that they were still on the journey, that they had not reached the end and so they must remain cautious and align their will to God's will. He called them to learn from the experience of the Israelites who, after having been saved from slavery, sinned against God. He advised to learn from their history and be cautious and strive to be faithful on their journey.

Jesus further advised his listeners to reform their lives and told them about the need for ongoing, lifelong conversion and renewal of their lives. He used the parable of the unyielding fig tree to teach them about the need to make changes and renew their lives. Give the tree another chance, another opportunity to yield. Nurture the tree, tenderly care for it, give it more time, give it another year, take another approach.....give the tree another chance to yield.

This parable proclaims the Gospel of second chance. Give yourself another chance, another opportunity...give others another chance, give the world another chance...never give up!

Fig tree in a Vineyard is a beautiful imagery. The tree had ample opportunities to yield and yet did not yield. We are now blessed with many opportunities which the world has not known before. The parable reminds us that even when we fail to use the given opportunities, we can start over again and make new beginnings. Our God never gives up on us. He continues to bless us with new opportunities.

Our first reading of today's mass reminds us that our God is ever present to us. He watches over us. He comes to us through the most surprising events, people, and situations. He came to Moses through a bush on fire to call his people to reform and renew and make new beginning in "a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15, first reading of today's mass)

The season of Lent calls us to change, conversion, and transformation. Lent is our time to break forth into new life, new strength, and new beginnings. The spirit of Lent is a spirit of change. I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on how your day has been and on how your Lenten journey has been helping you to change, to heal your brokenness, to be renewed in spirit, reformed in your religious practices, and transformed in Christ. May this Holy Season bless you and prepare you to celebrate the joy of Easter.

May God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....

Third Sunday of Lent

March 23, 2025

**Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security, and consequently, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him.
(Pope Francis)**

Collect

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**When you have found God within you, you have found your purpose.
Go fulfill your purpose!**

Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15

Moses became awakened to God and God's presence in an extraordinary event – a bush burning, but not consumed. Moses asked: tell me your name....so that I may tell my people who you are.....Without giving him a name, God asked Moses simply to rely on His presence in all that would happen.....And by the strength of God's presence, Moses led his people out of Egypt....

A cloud by day and fire by night...that is who God was for Moses....ever present GOD. May God be your strength, your guide, your focus, your purpose and the end of your journey.

Psalm 103

The Psalmist calls on his whole being, "soul", to bless, praise and thank God for all that has been and all that will be and ends his poem with "Bless the Lord, all His works".

Verses 1-5 The Psalmist calls his "soul", his whole being, to praise, bless and thank God for all that has been....to sing a song of gratitude.

Verses 6-12 He invites all his listeners to remember all that God has done for the rejected and the oppressed.....remember how God has removed all transgressions out of an amazing love...this "amazing Grace".

Verses 13-22 Describes God's Fatherly Love and calls all people, even things to respond to this amazing fatherly love.

**Bless the Lord, O My soul;
And all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O My soul,
And forget not all his benefits.**

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Paul reminded the Corinthians that they were still on the journey...that they had not reached the end....therefore they must remain cautious and align their will to God's will. He called them to learn from the experience of the Israelites who, after having been saved from slavery, sinned against God. He pleaded with them to learn from their history and be cautious and struggle to be faithful on the journey.

Be discerning! Do all you can to align your will to God's will!

Luke 13:1-9

Jesus addressed the questions about the connection between sin and suffering. He referred to two tragic events which his listeners were familiar with. The first was malicious and the second was an unforeseen accident. Neither was the result of the sin of the victims. Jesus used this as an example to illustrate the fact that there is no direct connection between sin and suffering.

Jesus used these events also to show that death comes sudden, unexpected and without warning and without giving the victims an opportunity to prepare for their death. Anyone could meet with sudden death like those victims of the tragedies mentioned.

Be prepared, be ready, repent, reform and change your ways and align your ways to God's ways.

Jesus called his listeners to reform their lives. He used the parable of the unyielding fig tree to teach them about the need to make changes and renew their lives. Give the tree another chance, another opportunity to yield. Nurture the tree, tenderly care for it, give it more time, give it another year, take another approach.....give the tree another chance to yield.

This parable proclaims the Gospel of second chance. Give yourself another chance, another opportunity...give others another chance, give the world another chance.....

Fig tree in a Vineyard is a beautiful imagery. The tree had ample opportunities to yield and yet did not yield.

Reflect on the many opportunities you are blessed with. We have opportunities now which the world has not known before.

Be Still for a few moments!

Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.

Spiritual Communion

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

Be Still for a few moments!

Saint of the day, March 30 - St. Toribio Alfonso de Mogrovejo and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Toribio was born on November 16, 1538, in Mayorga, Spain. He studied law and became a lawyer and then professor at Salamanca, receiving appointment as chief judge of the court of Inquisition at Granada under King Philip II of Spain. The king subsequently appointed him in

1580 to the post of archbishop of Lima, Peru. After receiving ordination and then consecration, he arrived in Peru in 1581 and soon demonstrated a deep zeal to reform the archdiocese and a determination to do all in his power to aid the poor and defend the rights of the Indians who were then suffering severely under Spanish occupation. He founded schools, churches, hospitals, and the first seminary in the New World. To assist his pastoral work among the Indians, he also mastered several Indian dialects. He died on March 23, 1606. He was canonized in 1726.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**During this third week of Lent, let me put away all my pride.
Let me change my heart and give up all that is not good within me.
Let me love God with all that I am and all that I have.**

