



# Time to PREP

- ♥ For Class
- ♥ For the Week
- ♥ For Yourself
- ♥ For Lent

WEEK #22 – March 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Gospel for March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

***Luke 13:1-9***

Some people told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.

Jesus said to them in reply,

“Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?”

By no means!

But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!

Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them— do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem?

By no means!

But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”

And he told them this parable:

“There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener,

‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none.

So cut it down.

Why should it exhaust the soil?’

He said to him in reply,

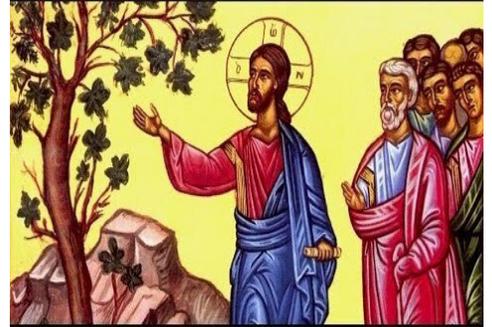
‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future.

If not you can cut it down.’”

## **Background on the Gospel Reading**

Now into the third week of the Season of Lent, our Sunday Gospel prepares us to hear Lent's call to conversion and repentance. Today's reading is found in the chapters of Luke's Gospel that describe Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. During this journey, Jesus teaches and heals. He must also respond to those who question and challenge his authority and actions. There is no parallel in Mark's or Matthew's Gospels for today's reading from Luke. While Mark and Matthew describe an incident in which Jesus curses the fig tree, today's reading makes the barren fig tree the subject of a parable.

Luke tells us that some among the crowds report to Jesus a massacre of Galileans by Pilate. The intention of the crowd seems to be to ask Jesus to explain why these people suffered. It was commonplace to render people's suffering as evidence of their sinfulness. Jesus challenges this interpretation. Those who were massacred were no more or less sinful than the ones who report the situation to Jesus. Jesus replies that even a fatal accident, a natural disaster, ought not to be interpreted as punishment for sin.



Jesus' words at first appear to have a fire-and-brimstone quality. Jesus says in essence, “Repent or perish as these people did; all are sinful before God and deserving of God's punishment.” The tone changes, however, in the parable that follows. The parable of the barren fig tree contrasts the patience and hopefulness of the gardener with the practicality of the property owner. When told to cut down the fig tree because it is not producing fruit, the gardener counsels patience. If properly tended, the barren fig tree may yet bear fruit.

Throughout his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus has been teaching about the Kingdom of God. In this parable, we find an image of God's patience and hopefulness as he prepares his Kingdom. God calls us to repent, and it is within his power to punish us for our failure to turn from our sinfulness. And yet God is merciful. He delays punishment and tends to us so that we may yet bear the fruit he desires from us.

This, then, is our reason for hope: Not only does God refuse to abandon us, he chooses to attend to us even when we show no evidence of his efforts. Next week's Gospel will give an even clearer picture of the kind of mercy that God shows to us.

### ***PLEASE PRAY FOR...***



- ♥ Sister of Lucille Panos (Special Needs Catechist) who passed away.
- ♥ Pray for God's peace and reconciliation to overcome all hatred, conflict, and war;
- ♥ The well-being, health and happiness of PREP catechists, students and families;
- ♥ Pray for all, especially those suffering and struggling silently.