

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Make Us Whole

God of our longing,
your love surpasses all understanding.
Humbly repentant,
we ask for your mercy in our
Lenten journey.
Though we have failed to love others,
and you above all,

we pray for a new heart.
Though we have fallen,
feel broken and lonely,
you call us to return to you,
and we desire to be made whole.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Another Chance



Today's readings: Exodus 3:1–8a, 13–15; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 7–8, 11; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 10–12; Luke 13:1–9. Jesus often taught through parables, stories that illustrate truths and moral principles through everyday encounters, situations, and activities.

Today, the parable comes from the world of agriculture. A fig tree has not borne any fruit for several years. The owner wants to cut it down, but the gardener wants to give it another chance, providing especially good care to it for another year. If after receiving increased attention the tree does not bear fruit, it will be cut down. Just as the gardener is willing to spend more time cultivating the fig tree, God

will offer us many chances to change our lives. It is up to us to allow God's love to nourish us so that we can bear good fruit. Where do you need to be open to God's intervention in your life? Will you seek God to change your heart to mend a relationship or to help another person in need?

God graciously welcomes us when we repent and desire to be more of who we are called to be. Allowing Jesus to cultivate the soil of our hearts brings growth. As we give our hearts to the Lord, our compassion, generosity, and humility will increase. With changed hearts, we gain more clarity about the meaning and purpose of our lives, and will spread God's love to others.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 21

Attending to the Ordinary

The Gospel today notes how those with no status, such as an unknown widow, a leper, and a man from Nazareth, were overlooked. No one saw their greatness. The living God works in and through every part of creation, most notably through human beings. Pay attention to all the ways that God presents himself to you in ordinary ways—the sunrise, a budding plant, the person behind the counter when you get lunch, the laugh of a family member. *Today's readings:* 2 Kings 5:1–15ab; Psalm 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Luke 4:24–30.

Tuesday, March 22

How Many Times?

How many times should we forgive? Jesus says seventy-seven times. Furthermore, he doesn't mean an exact count either! If we are to expect God to forgive us, we must be willing to forgive others. Set aside time today for journaling, reflecting upon, and writing about any grudges you are holding or past grievances you have not released. Forgive in your heart, and vow to keep the grievance in the past. *Today's readings:* Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8 and 9; Matthew 18:21–35.

Wednesday, March 23

The Greatest

Greatness often is associated with accomplishments, athleticism, or scholarship. Jesus presents another vision in the Gospel. He tells us that to be the greatest in the kingdom, we need only to follow God's commandments and teach others to do the same. The best way to teach is by example. Be mindful that your actions and words show love for God and your neighbor. *Today's readings:* Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.

Thursday, March 24

Listen, and Listen Again

Jesus strongly tells us that a kingdom divided against itself cannot survive. If hearts are hardened against God's Word, we cannot be unified—as a community, a country, or a Church. Pray for unity today, that we will listen to the voice of God and open our hearts to God and one another. *Today's readings:* Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2; 6–7; 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.

Friday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord

Today we hear the story of Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel, when Mary said yes to God's will. Mary's courage, faithfulness, and humility are examples for all seeking to live as disciples. The annunciation is the first of the joyful mysteries. (The other mysteries are the visitation, the nativity, the presentation in the temple, and the finding in the temple.) Pray the Rosary, reflecting on each joyful mystery. *Today's readings:* Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.

Saturday, March 26

Steadfast Love

The Pharisee was sure of his worthiness, while the tax collector was just as sure of his sinfulness. Though the Pharisee fasted, paid tithes, and kept the law, it was the tax collector who went home justified. Our God of steadfast love and mercy welcomes back sinners who seek forgiveness. Do not be afraid to acknowledge your sins and receive God's mercy and forgiveness through the sacrament of reconciliation. Check neighboring parishes and your own for schedules for confession. God will heal and bind up the wounds of contrite sinners. *Today's readings:* Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab; Luke 18:9–14.

