

# Read

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7,  
8, 11

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Luke 13:1-9

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday of Lent

March 24, 2019



#### REFLECTION

From an early age, children learn the process for apologizing. Most of the time, little kids do not even know why they are forced to apologize for something. But learning how to do this shows grace in character building. Saying, "I'm sorry" takes a lot of humility and strength. First you have to recognize that you have hurt someone else. Next, you have to admit wrongdoing in a tone that reflects your desire to reconcile. Then you have to wait and pray that the person will forgive you for your lapse in judgement. Some in society would say it is weak to seek forgiveness, but Jesus reminds us of the importance of cultivating a life of humility and reconciliation. Luke's account of the Gospel reports Jesus' reminder that "If you do not repent, you will all perish" (Luke 13:3). He reminds us that no fight or transgression is worth the overall pain and convenience that taking shortcuts produces.



#### ACTION

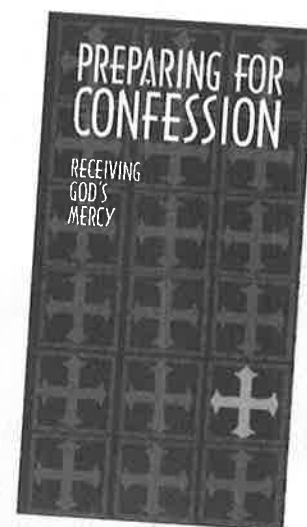
During Lent as you prepare for the coming of Easter, check out your parish schedule for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Give yourself time to journal and reflect on areas of your life where you need healing. Enter into Reconciliation not as a duty, but as a gift about to be received. Whatever your penance is, spend time quietly in prayer and reflection after you meet with the priest before you head out into the world renewed and resolved to avoid perishing and instead feel inspired to build up the Kingdom of God.

**Preparing for Confession**, a short booklet by Paul Turner, published by Liturgy Training Publications, is an excellent resource to help you prepare to participate in the sacrament.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ In what ways are you in need of healing?
- ❖ What habits or distractions prevent you from living a life of forgiveness?





March 24, 2019

## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

### LECTIONARY #30C

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Luke 13:1-9

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

This week's readings focus on two key themes: (a) God reveals and (b) man responds. The First Reading tells the story of God telling Moses his name, which fortifies Moses in his mission to lead the Israelites out of slavery. The Second Reading alludes back to the life the Israelites led in the desert, which was often fraught with unfaithfulness and doubt of all that God had shared with them. Finally, the Gospel reminds us that we are known by the fruit we bear, and that Christ will look at how we have responded to what has been revealed to us. The Gospel today incorporates a sometimes confusing or overlooked parable: the barren fig tree. Today's reflections (along with the readings) ask us to think about how we respond to what God tells us.

**Q FOCUS:** *The greatest gift from God revealed in Jesus.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This is still the season of Lent, a time of great preparation for the holiest days of our year, but tomorrow's Solemnity of the Annunciation is a great reminder (and a great celebration) of the immense gift that is the Incarnation. God became man so that humanity could one day be in union eternally with God. And that entire process began when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear a son, the Messiah. In faith, and with great humility, Mary spoke the words, "May it

be done to me" (Luke 1:38), and accepted God's invitation to give birth to Jesus. This solemnity can help frame this week's readings, for we hear today about how God reveals himself to us and how we are meant to bear fruit in him. Mary, who experienced this remarkable revelation bore the greatest gift of all: the Son himself, whom we all seek.

### Church Teaching Connection

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. For you, I say, was God made man. Eternal death would have awaited you had he not been born in time. Never would you be freed from your sinful flesh, had he not taken to himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting would be your misery, had he not performed this act of mercy. You would not have come to life again, had he not come to die your death. You would have been broken down, had he not come to help you. You would have perished, had he not come. . . . Let us joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption" (St. Augustine, *The Confessions*).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory.**

### Gospel

Luke 13:1-9

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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.’”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

“If you do not repent, you will all perish!” (Luke 13:3). Pretty harsh words from Jesus in this Gospel. Jesus isn't cutting any corners. He says exactly what he means: repentance is necessary when the Gospel is heard. If one has heard the Truth and still hasn't responded, then that person will perish.

► **Does that thought scare you? That if you don't repent, you will perish? Why is it frightening?**

The readings for Mass today, while seemingly disconnected and maybe a bit confusing, point to this

reality: when something is revealed to us, we must respond. (*You may need to recap the other readings since only the Gospel was proclaimed at today's session.*) In the First Reading from Exodus, Moses is herding his father-in-law's sheep (not even his own property!), when God speaks to him. God commands Moses to go into Egypt, a land with which he is familiar (but estranged), and lead the Israelite people to freedom, releasing them from the slavery they've suffered for over four hundred years. This is no small task, and so God gives Moses a remarkable gift to fortify him on his journey and in his mission. God reveals his name to Moses.

God says, “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14), identifying himself as existence itself. And Moses responds in kind. He, in a very real way, repents so that he will not perish. He acts based on what he has been told. He goes into Egypt and will eventually lead the Israelites out of slavery and into the wilderness to join in covenant with God.

► **How could this story about a burning bush and God's name possibly connect to the Gospel for today, which has some confusing phrases about repentance and death and then a parable about a dying fig tree?**

► **What do you think the connection is with these two passages? Why and how?**

We hear the story of Moses before we hear the story of the dying fig tree because both are meant to serve as examples of how we should be in our lives of faith, especially during this journey of Lent. Moses responded to God's command, is fortified by God's revelation of his name, and goes into Egypt to lead the people to freedom. We are meant to do the same, and the parable of the fig tree gives warning as to what happens if we don't respond as we should.

Jesus tells this story about a man who finds his fig tree barren after three years. In frustration, the man demands that his gardener cut the tree down because it has proven useless and unresponsive. Even so, the gardener (who has tended to this tree and knows its history) begs for one more chance to let the tree yield fruit. The tree needs another chance to respond to the gardener so that it can, in a very real sense, prove its worth.

► Are we this fig tree? Are we planted in God's garden, and given invitation after invitation to act in faith for him? Have you responded? Have you yielded fruit? Or do you need to be cut down because you haven't shown any progress or response?

In this third week of Lent, we are at somewhat of a turning point.

► How are your Lenten sacrifices going? Have you struggled to remain faithful to what you've given up or taken on? Why has this Lent gone well, or why has it been a struggle?

While seemingly disconnected and confusing, the parable of the fig tree and the story of God's name being revealed are actually quite relevant to our Lenten journey. We are being invited to respond to God, and he reveals things to us throughout our Lenten journey to help us respond as we should. The Lord wants us to yield fruit. He wants us to go into the desert and do as he has commanded. The Lord invites us to respond to his revelation so that we can yield fruit.

► Are we going to respond? Are we going to accept what we've heard and respond as we should? If we do, what is in store for us? If we don't, what will become of us?

Today, think about your own personal response to the Lord this Lent.

► Are you paying attention? Are you acting in response? Or have you grown lax and lazy?

► What can you do to get back on track?

## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 162.

Our Lenten Journey is a chance to pay attention to what God is revealing to us. We must actively respond, in faith, just like Moses when he went into Egypt. We must not be lazy or lax, for we are meant to bear fruit unlike the barren fig tree.

What can we do to pay attention to the way God is revealing things to us? What noises distract us from hearing his voice? What temptations pull us away from producing fruit in our lives of faith?

## Act on the Word

Have all your group members write down a nickname they used to have as a child (or they currently have) on a notecard or sheet of paper. On the back of the card/paper, have them also write three little-known or unknown facts about themselves. Shuffle the cards up and hold them up one by one with the nickname facing the group and read the three facts. Have everyone guess which person this might be. Ideally, this will help show how people of different backgrounds are each known by the name we know, not just by the private or cute family nickname. But, if we pay attention and take note of their identity and personality, we may notice who they are through the facts they chose to share.

## Closing Prayer

*God of love,  
you reveal yourself to us in Jesus Christ, our life  
and our salvation.  
Keep us faithful to his example in all we say and do.  
May our prayer and our efforts give you glory and  
praise this day.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends. If your parish will be celebrating the second scrutiny with those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil, the Year A readings may be used. The handout and session for the Year A readings are found in the appendix of this book on pages 253-256.