

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Third Sunday in Lent

When we come together with others to talk about our lives, we often discuss others. If people work for the Church, they talk about their bishop or the pope. If they are ordinary lay parishioners, they talk about the pastor or some other parish staff member. If people work for an educational institution, talk and judgment often heads toward top administrators. If we're wearing our hats as citizens, we talk about those in office whether it is the president or the local city council. See the point? We love to dwell on the performance of others, especially those "in charge."

We have described Lent as a desert-like retreat for Christians. Retreats are opportunities for self-reflection. Look in the mirror. How am I doing? Is there anything I can do to be better? These kinds of questions are appropriate during Lent. Today's Gospel listens in on the questions being discussed by the general public and asked of Jesus. For instance, did you hear about those Galileans who were slaughtered by the government? Jesus ignores their question and shifts attention to them. Let's not talk about others. Let's focus on you.

A Gospel Word for the Home

Luke 13:1-9

We always stand in the presence of God. God knows our hearts and our interests and cares about them. So if you need to repent or change, ask for the courage to do it. As philosophers remind us, only humans can act contrary to their natures. We are free to do the wrong thing and/or less than our best. Lent is a great time to think about this.

Thought for the Week

God has expectations and plans for each of us. Spiritual writers like to mention that there's a reason why God created you and not someone else. God created *you* to accomplish something that only you could do. It may not be something that merits newspaper headlines, but it is something of eternal value. Maybe you are the one who brings a smile to the face of people worn down by difficulties. Maybe you bring love to a child who would otherwise not have that experience. The story of the fig tree joins the theme of good works to repentance. Rarely do we know the exact reason we have been created, but we can be assured that there is one.

Parent Survival

What do you enjoy the most about parenting? What do you do best as you try to help your children? These are important questions because our faith says that we have been personally gifted by God to fulfill the responsibilities associated with our vocation. Each of us parents our children in a way that is unique to us. While books on parenting can be helpful, in the end it's how each of us does it that counts. And one very helpful way to gain some insight into ourselves in this matter is to ask what we really do well.

Just as there are no ideal marriages, there are no *ideal* parents. We each parent in our own way. Comparisons are odious and a waste of time. God wants us to be ourselves, the person he created *you* to be. Identify the talents that God has given you and let them shine.

Car or Meal Talk

Say, Let's name a few things that each of us are good at. (So and so does a good job in answering the phone or making a mess.) Don't be afraid of using humor. This can be fun and enlightening.

One-Line Prayer

Creator God, help us to appreciate the great variety you have created everywhere. Amen.