**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MAR. 22-23, 2025**

Third Sunday of Lent

**Gospel Reading**

Lk 13: 1-9

At that time some people who were present there told him

about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the

blood of their sacrifices.

He 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.’”

**Intercession**

May God’s laws find fertile ground in our hearts, and may we bear this love to others through support of the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal.

**Copy for Bulletin Announcement**

We all need what Jesus gives – grace, truth, loving but firm accountability, and, above all, forgiveness. But to receive all these gifts, we have to take the first step and repent, honestly. We need to acknowledge where, to paraphrase the Penitential Act, in our thoughts and words, in what we have done and what we have failed to do we have sinned. Too often, it’s easier to focus on the sins of others. Concentrating on our co-worker lies, our neighbor’s laziness, or our spouse’s impatience keeps our own failings in the background.

But Jesus tells us, repeatedly, to repent. None of us, no matter how good we are or how hard to try to conquer our sins, is beyond the need for Christ’s redemption. Without it, He warns, we “will all perish as” the Galileans or the people crushed by tower at Siloam.

Lent is the season of repentance, of prayer and fasting, of almsgiving. Please pray for the success of the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal, and if you are able, please consider making a contribution to the appeal as a form of almsgiving this Lent.

**Copy for Pulpit Announcement**

What is important to us requires nurturing. We are successful students because we apply ourselves to our studies. Career success stems from much effort and even more hours. Strong marriages result when spouses prioritize their relationship. Friendships don’t just happen; they involve the investment of time and attention.

Our relationship with God is similar. It is more fruitful when we spend time in God’s company. Weekly Mass is a start, and grace before meals is a nice daily reminder of the source of our blessings. But if you are feeling like the barren fig tree in today’s Gospel, maybe you need to fertilize your friendship with our Lord by spending a little more time in His presence. Cultivate the soil. Dedicate just 10 minutes to reading Scripture, saying a decade of the rosary, starting a Novena, or simply sitting quietly and listening to what God wants to say to you. And then, time and resources allowing, try prayer in action by serving those in need in our community or supporting programs and initiative that do, such as the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal. There are many ways to nurture our friendship with God.

**Social Media Post/Content**

Photo: Fruit tree brimming with produce.

Header: “I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future” – Luke 13:8-9

Copy: Let our words, actions, and prayers bear fruit – that is, grow closer to God in faith! Through support of the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal, we can nourish others in Christ’s name.