

Reflection on the Gospel-3rd Sunday of Lent Year C (Luke 13:1-9)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel begins with two warnings about the need for repentance. It ends with a parable about a non-productive fig tree and a faithful "gardener God". The warnings include two examples of untimely deaths, one reported to Jesus and then used by him to illustrate the urgent need for repentance, the other reported by Jesus as a further illustration of his point. With respect to the first example, Jewish history recounts instances of Pilate's cruelty, but makes no mention of his execution of Galileans and the mingling of their blood with their sacrifices. Neither is there any other record of the collapse of the Siloam tower and the resultant death of eighteen people. Jesus insists that those killed are no more sinful and no more deserving of death than any of their fellow Galileans or Jerusalemites. They are certainly not being punished for their sins and those who make such a link between suffering and sin have got it all wrong.

So why does Jesus twice assert, "If you do not repent you will all perish in the same way" or "as they did"? The answer seems to lie in the constant need for self-reflection and the missed opportunity for conversion or reconciliation in the case of sudden and unexpected death. In other words, Jesus is telling his listeners, "Don't be caught unawares; turn your life around in the direction of the gospel while you are alive and well". The Greek verb "to repent" literally means to think again. It can have the sense of expanding one's vision or one's horizons, to think beyond the narrow confines of one's own interests and one's own little world. In the context of Jesus' teaching, it is a call to take seriously the message of God's empire or reign which embraces the whole Earth community.

The parable of the non-productive fig tree in the vineyard approaches the same topic from another angle. The owner of the vineyard wants to get rid of a fig tree that fails to bear fruit after three years. From an economic perspective, his position is perfectly reasonable: why should a non-fruiting fig tree continue to sap the goodness of the soil? Why not go for more vines, more grapes, more wine, and forget about the fig tree? The faithful or constant gardener, on the other hand, is like the womb-compassionate God of Israel who cares about the soil itself and wants to give the fig tree another chance, to turn it around and assist it to bear fruit, if the owner will relent. At this mid-point in our Lenten journey in the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we might get in closer touch with our compassionate "gardener" God and open ourselves to a more expansive understanding of the pain of the planet.

BULLETIN for the THIRD SUNDAY of LENT, YEAR C



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 29th FEBRUARY 2016

MONDAY to FRIDAY: No Masses this week - Priests' Retreat

SATURDAY: No Sacrament of Reconciliation

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

READINGS - The FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT, YEAR A

First:	1 Samuel 16:1.6-7.10-13
Second:	Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel:	John 9:1-41

ANNIVERSARIES: Joan Shannon, Jack Gittings.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nell McGettigan, Pamela Hayes, Anthony Conroy, Nathan Cambell, Karen Hayes, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Marinna Lenkic, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Mary Barnett, Frank Forbes, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Margaret Gallagher, Pat Pearce.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: .**Team 1:** L. Noonan ©, G. Clarkson.

Next Week: .**Team 2:** B. Perkins ©, F. Nolan, J. Lewis.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,324.70
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Credit card:	\$ 3,799.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>750.00</u>
		\$ 6,173.70
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 1,065.00

LENTEN REGULATIONS

See Notice Board.

WALK FOR JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES

Date: Sunday, 20th March

Time: 2.00 pm

Where: State Library, cnr Swanston & Latrobe Streets, Melbourne.

See Notice Board.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Contributions donated towards Project Compassion support people around the world experiencing extreme poverty and injustice. It will also help people in marginalized areas of the Pacific who have been affected by cyclone Winston to rebuild their lives for a sustainable future. In these challenging times, our prayers, solidarity and support is important. Please return your envelope/box to help support of these most vulnerable communities.

KEEP THIS DATE FREE

ANOINTING MASS on Wednesday, 9th March at 2.00 pm. Mass will be followed by afternoon tea in the hall. Donations of food will be gratefully received. Anyone who needs transport please contact a member of the Caring Group.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

These international, ecumenical prayer services will be held this year on Friday, 4th March. The service, used worldwide, has been prepared this year by the Christian women of Cuba, a communist country.

Services in Ballarat will be hosted by the Anglican Cathedral Church of Christ the King and Scots Presbyterian Church at 10.00 am and 2.00 pm respectively, and at Ss Peter & Paul's Catholic Church in Buninyong at 7.00 pm. Services will also be held at Pineview and Nazareth House and at John Curtin Hostel in Creswick.

Please join us to share the hopes and prayers of the Christian women of the world.

For further information please see the Community Diary in The Courier on Thursdays, or contact Janice Marty on 5341 3809. Men are very welcome!

MASS OF THE OILS

The Mass of the Oils will be celebrated in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat at 6.30 pm on **Monday, 21st March**. This Mass is a celebration of the whole Church of the Diocese of Ballarat. We celebrate the unity and ministry of the ordained priests in the midst of the entire priestly people of God of the Diocese. This Mass also has special significance for those who will use the blessed oils in 2016 - the sick, those to be baptised and confirmed. All members of the Diocese are invited to participate in this celebration which truly expresses the unity of the Diocesan Church. For further information contact the Pastoral Ministry Office, ph: 5337 7159 or email: pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au

NAZARETH HOUSE AUXILIARY ST PATRICK'S DAY COFFEE PARTY

Thursday, 17th March at 1.30 pm in the Hall. See notice board.