



3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 3:1-8,13-15
Ps 103:1-4, 6-8,11
1 Cor 10:1-6,10-12
Luke 13:1-9

Monday March 8

2 Kings 5:1-15
Ps 42:2-3 43:3-4
Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday March 9

Daniel 3:25,34-43
Ps 25:4-9
Matt 18:21-35

Wednesday March 10

Deut 4:1,5-9
Ps 147:12-13,15-16,19-20
Matt 5:17-19

Thursday March 11

Jeremiah 7:23-28
Ps 95:1-2,6-9
Luke 11:14-23

Friday March 12

Hosea 14:2-10
Ps 81:6-11,14,17
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday March 13

Hosea 6:1-6
Ps 51:3-4,18-21
Luke 18:9-14

How do you feel when someone who's been hurtful or morally corrupt gets hit with a hardship that makes them suffer? Our natural tendency is to rejoice because justice has finally been meted out.

Jesus addresses this in Luke 13:1-9. He wants us to understand that we cannot truthfully say that someone is a "greater sinner", even if that person is doing more harm than we are.

Everyone has been created in the image of God, even the worst ones. Those who show an opposite image are nonetheless loved by Jesus Christ, who died for them.

No person is an evil person, just a broken person. The broken are those who have been the victims of evil and were seduced by it into believing that this is the best

way to live. They don't understand that they can be healed by the Sinless One who allowed himself to be broken for our redemption. We should feel sorry for them. We should mourn with Jesus for the brokenness that continues within each evil-doer's soul.

When we don't care enough to grieve over a person's inner destruction, we are sinning. We are disregarding what Jesus did for them on the cross.

All those who have sinned against you are like the fig tree in Jesus' parable. If you have access to them, he wants you to till their soil. He wants you to fertilize their



souls with love and with the truth of the Gospel as taught by your actions and sometimes with words. He wants you to give them a gentle but obvious invitation to grow in the right direction.

Notice that Jesus doesn't want us to keep a diseased, disintegrating tree in the garden forever. After (and only after) we have done everything possible to help, if the evil-doer does not want to change, the best care we can give to the garden is to cut down the tree. This means walking away or calling in the authorities for intervention and letting the sinner reap what he sows. This, too, is very loving. When fertilizer won't produce good fruits, a fallen tree becomes mulch and enriches the ground for a new beginning.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Who has been so hurtful to you that you wish God would punish them? Can you feel sorry for them? Can you pray for God to do good for them? If not, take this to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and ask for God's help in feeling more concerned about them. In this, you'll find freedom from the anger and pain that has been holding you captive.
2. What steps can be taken to fertilize the lives of problematic people?
3. How do you know when it's time to continue trying and when it's time to quit and chop a tree down?