



28 February 2016

3rd Sunday of Lent

Year C

## Called to Bear Fruits of Holiness

**G**od's patience and goodness with us during this Lenten journey should not be taken to mean that there is nothing to change in our behavior. It can only mean that the Lord, in His patient love for us, is waiting for us to produce the fruits of a sincere and lasting conversion.

*We should not think that conversion consists*

*only in avoiding sin. It is also moving away from doing little for the Lord, to doing as much as we can for the building of the Kingdom and for our own sanctification.*

*Let our participation in this Eucharistic celebration be a renewal of our commitment to bear fruits of holiness through the fulfillment of our duties.*



### INTRODUCTORY RITES



#### Entrance Antiphon

*(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)*

**My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare.**

**Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.**

#### Greeting

**P** –Blessed be God who calls us to bear fruits of goodness that will last unto eternal life! May His love and peace be with you all!

**All**–And with your spirit!

#### Penitential Act

**P** –With gratitude to the Lord who calls us to conversion in this Lenten season, let us pause for a moment and realize how much we need

his forgiveness. *(Pause)*

**All**–I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

**P** –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All**–Amen!

**P** –Lord, have mercy!

**All**–Lord, have mercy!

**P** –Christ, have mercy!

**All**–Christ, have mercy!

**P** –Lord, have mercy!

**All**–Lord, have mercy!

#### Collect *(Opening Prayer)*

**P** –O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All**–Amen!

### LITURGY OF THE WORD



**1st Reading** Ex 3:1-8a.13-15

*Continuing the presentation of the highlights of Salvation History, the sacred Author today describes two*

very important events in the history of the people of Israel: the baring of God's plan to set His people free and the revelation of His name. Being the object of God's saving plan is a unique honor not only for Israel but also for us.

**R** –A proclamation from the Book of Exodus

Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock across the desert, he came to *Horeb*, the mountain of God.

There an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in fire flaming out of a bush. As he looked on, he was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed. So Moses decided, "I must go over to look at this remarkable sight, and see why the bush is not burned." When the Lord saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." God said, "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your fathers," he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey." Moses said to God, "But when I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" God replied, "I AM WHO AM." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever; thus am I to be remembered through all generations."

The Word of the Lord!  
All—Thanks be to God!

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 103

**R** –*The Lord is kind and merciful!*

R. M. Velez

\* Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. **R.**

\* He pardons all your iniquities, he heals all your ills. He redeems your life from destruction, he crowns you with kindness and compassion. **R.**

\* The Lord secures justice and the rights of all the oppressed. He has made known his ways to Moses, and his deeds to the children of Israel. **R.**

\* Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him. **R.**

**2nd Reading** 1 Cor 10:1-6.10-12

*The Israelites had received so many favors from the Lord, but most of them failed to show their gratitude and even disobeyed Him. This was the reason why the Lord punished them in the desert. Writing to the Christians of Corinth, St.*

*Paul warns them against making the same mistake.*

**R** –A proclamation from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Christ.

Yet God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the desert.

These things happened as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things, as they did. Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.

The Word of the Lord!  
All—Thanks be to God!

**Verse before the Gospel**

*All—(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)*

Repent, says the Lord; the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

*(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)*

**Gospel** Lk 13:1-9

*The essence of the passage we are about to hear is an exhortation to repent and bear the fruit of a life lived according to God's will.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!  
All—And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
All—Glory to you, O Lord!

**GLOSSARY:** • *Horeb*: Another name for Mount Sinai, the very important site where Moses received his mission from the Lord and the Ten Commandments, and where he sealed the Covenant between the people of Israel and the Lord God.

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.’”

The Gospel of the Lord!  
*All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!*

## Homily

### Profession of Faith *(Nicene Creed)*

*All—*I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow)\* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.\* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was

buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

### Prayer of the Faithful

*P —*The parable in today’s Gospel passage reminds us of our duty to bear fruits of good works in our life. Aware of our weakness, let us implore the Lord’s help for ourselves and all other human beings as we say:

*All—Merciful God, hear us!*

*C —*That the Catholic Church, under the leadership of the Holy Father and all the Bishops, may faithfully fulfill her mission to lead people to salvation, let us pray! *R.*

*C —*That all those who are suffering, either physically or spiritually, may put their trust in God and find support in their brothers and sisters, let us pray! *R.*

*C —*That all sinners may heed Jesus’ call to conversion and abandon their wrong way of life, let us pray! *R.*

*C —*That, like the gardener in Jesus’ parable, we may intercede for our brothers and sisters and help them grow in holiness, let us pray! *R.*

*C —*That all of us may bear fruits of sincere repentance, reconciliation and active involvement in promoting the good of the community, let us pray! *R.*

*C —*Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions.  
*(Pause)*

Let us pray! *R.*

*P —*O God, You have been so patient with us, putting up with our laziness and moral failings. Strengthen us in our resolve to live an authentic Christian life, filled with works of mercy and love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Model and Savior who lives and reigns forever and ever.  
*All—Amen!*



### Preparation of the Gifts

*P —*Pray, brethren. . .  
*All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.*

### Prayer over the Offerings

*P —*Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor.

Through Christ our Lord.  
*All—Amen!*

### Preface of Lent II

*P —*It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

*All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!*

## Memorial Acclamation

**P** –The mystery of faith!  
**All**–When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!



**All**–Our Father . . .  
**P** –Deliver us, Lord . . .  
**All**–For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

## Sign of Peace

### Breaking of the Bread

**All**–Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)  
**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

## Communion

**P** –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.  
**All**–Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

## Communion Antiphon

*(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)*

**The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.**

## Prayer after Communion

**P** –As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to

true completion.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**All**–Amen!



**P** –The Lord be with you.  
**All**–And with your spirit!  
**P** –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing.  
*(Pause)*  
Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kind-

ness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbor, they may fulfill the whole of your commands.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**All**–Amen!  
**P** –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
**All**–Amen!  
**P** –Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!  
**All**–Thanks be to God!

## The Call to Produce Abundant Fruit

**F**ig trees planted in vineyards receive preferential treatment – well-tilled soil, good manure, protection from vandals and animals. If for one year they do not bear fruit, they are without excuse. The decision of the owner of the vineyard in the Gospel to have the barren fig tree cut down is more than justified. Its performance had definitely been disappointing. *(See Lk 13:7.)*

But barrenness is not a defect that can be found only in trees. It can also be found in people. *Spiritual and moral barrenness* means the absence of those dispositions and actions which God has a right to expect from us. In spite of the much care and love we have received from Him, our response is often disappointing.

In most cases, it is not a matter of laziness. We are very active. We do many things. We may even give the impression that we are achieving a lot . . . Many of our actions, however, are just like pompous leaves which suck most of our vital energies. We are constantly in danger of forgetting that what matters is *not how many things* we do, but rather, *WHAT* we do, *HOW* and *WHY* we do it. We are expected to bear fruits of holiness by doing our duty to the best of our ability and out of love for God.

The Lord, of course, is usually patient. But His patience should not be taken to mean that He is either indifferent to what we do, or that He has become unable to check our misbehavior. It simply means that, in His love, and thanks to the intercession of Jesus, He gives us another chance. But a day will come when we will have to account even for these additional signs of love.

These are days of grace; days for an honest evaluation of our performance in the light of God’s generosity and of His expectation. If we discover that our life is so full of “leaves” but lacks the fruits of piety, gratitude, honesty, generosity, purity, sense of responsibility, faith, hope, love . . . we have only one thing to do: UNDERGO CONVERSION and REFORM. In the first part of today’s Gospel, Jesus uses this word twice, both as an exhortation and as a warning. *(See vv. 3 and 5.)*

But he does more than just exhort and warn us. Not only does he give the warning and intercede for us with the Father, but he also *offers us his help* to rid us from our barrenness. His *teaching*, his *example*, his *grace* will produce the miracle, if only we allow him to work in us and cooperate with him.

This might be our last chance to finally start producing the long-awaited fruits which will delight our divine Master. They will delight our very selves in the first place.



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