

March 23, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

THE CALL

By Julie Mussché

Excerpts from Today's Readings

*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."*

EXODUS 3:4-6

*"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.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:6; 10-12

*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.”

LUKE 13:1-9

Reflection

Preparing for confession every Saturday as a child required reflection and having an accounting of sins. The Ten Commandments as interpreted by the

Baltimore Catechism served as the measuring stick in defining sin with part of the preparation being consideration of the number of times an offense occurred. A very simple method, a good approach for a child, as a penitent, to contemplate sin. Does it not, however, seem to gloss over the relational aspect of sin?

In today's readings on this Third Sunday of Lent, the interlacing focus of the readings is sin and repentance. For me, the first reading unfolds the heart of the narrative. God calls Moses from within the burning bush, and Moses responds, "Here I am." In that response, a sacred partnership is formed. It is a partnership envisioning the liberation of the Israelites from slavery. God is also named in this exchange, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This forges the partnership as something eternal.

In the second reading, we learn of the consequence of rejecting God and the partnership. The punctuating message: reject evil. Not an inconsistent instruction from other scriptural directives -- another slant on the instruction, "Choose life, that you and your descendants may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Moving to the Gospel reading from John, Jesus is referencing contemporary tragedies, distinguishing that sinners are sinners, no less or greater, and that without repentance, all will perish. At the end of the reading, the parable of the fig tree is proffered and we have a hopeful glimpse of the fruits of repentance. With the intervention of the orchard gardener, the life of the tree is spared with his promise to "cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it."

And here we come full circle, would you agree, that relationships take work? They need to be tended to, fed and given attention. Sin breaches and causes distance in this relationship and for life to wither. As God's partners, how are we called to cultivate this sacred relationship? How do we choose life? What can Jesus, the gardener, do to help you grow?



Something Hopeful
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

- What is your notion of sin?
 - During this Lenten season, how are you called to repentance?
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For Prayer

*Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*

*Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

PSALM 103:1-5

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