

A Second Chance

On this Third Sunday of Lent, we are reminded of the importance of repentance and the need for spiritual renewal. In the Gospel reading from Luke 13:1-9, we hear about Jesus addressing the crowd regarding two tragic events. He reminds them that those who suffered were not worse sinners than others. Instead, He calls everyone to repentance, stating, "Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did." This is a challenging message that invites us to examine our own lives.

Lent is a time of introspection and renewal. Jesus emphasizes that repentance is not just about feeling sorry for our sins but taking tangible steps to change our lives. The fig tree in the parable symbolizes us. The gardener's plea for one more year to nurture the tree reflects God's patience and desire for our growth. God gives us time and opportunities to bear fruit!

As we reflect on this message, let's consider some practical ways we can apply these teachings in our daily lives:

- **Self-Examination:** Take time this week for personal reflection. Set aside a few moments each day to ask yourself: "What areas of my life need change?" Consider keeping a journal to note your thoughts and feelings as you explore these questions.
- **Acts of Kindness:** Lent is a perfect time to practice kindness. Challenge yourself to perform at least one act of kindness each day. This could be as simple as helping a neighbor, volunteering your time, or reaching out to someone in need. These small actions can lead to significant changes in our hearts and communities.
- **Confession and Reconciliation:** Make a commitment to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is an opportunity to experience God's mercy and to start anew. If you've been away from the sacrament, now is the perfect time to return. It's a powerful way to acknowledge our shortcomings and seek forgiveness.
- **Prayer and Fasting:** Deepen your prayer life by incorporating specific prayers of repentance. Consider fasting from something that distracts you from God, whether it's social media, certain foods, or unhealthy habits. Use that time instead to draw closer to God through prayer or Scripture reading.
- **Community Involvement:** Engage with your community! This could mean participating in parish activities, joining a Lenten study group, or reaching out to someone who might feel isolated. Building connections with others can help strengthen your faith and encourage collective growth.

In conclusion, let us take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of God's mercy. May we strive to be like the fruitful fig tree, nourished by God's love and producing good works. As we continue our Lenten journey, may we be transformed and renewed in our faith. Amen!

Fr. Bula.