Third Sunday of Lent — March 20, 2022

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

In the news, we are constantly learning of terrible tragedies throughout the world with big losses of life: the crash of a jetliner, a hurricane, an earthquake. These tragedies remind us of the ones mentioned in this weekend's gospel. Galileans slaughtered by Pilate and eighteen people killed by a falling tower. And like the people of our Lord's Day, maybe we are tempted to feel that victims of such sudden, unexpected tragedies are receiving just punishment for their sins.

But Jesus warns us, as he does frequently in the gospels, that it is not ours to judge other people and their guilt in the sight of God. No one but God really knows what is in the human heart. Rather than judge the victims of tragedies, we should turn their experience to our own profit by allowing the tragedy to remind us that we must face the eternal death of damnation unless we are truly repentant.

These days, fire and brimstone homilies or sermons are not popular, if ever they are really popular. No one likes to sit in church and hear dire predictions of eternal damnation hurled at his or her head by a pulpit-pounding preacher. After all, the people in church are there because they are trying to be good and want to please God. The people in church are not pagans or atheist or profligates. In comparison with many people, those present in church are living saints. Why should they hear about repentance?

The point is that we cannot afford to be complacent. Complacency leads to pride, and as someone has said, "Pride comes before the fall." St. Paul points out that God showed great favor toward his people in the exodus, and in the desert, he fed them miraculously. They knew they had been chosen by God. Nevertheless, in the desert they failed God. And that failure did not happen all of a sudden. They lulled themselves into a spirit of complacency in which they feel that all was in good order in their lives, that God would take care of them no matter what they did or did not do. They believed themselves, therefore, to be superior to other people, and from that dizzy height of pride, they fell into deep disfavor with God, who punished them severely.

We are the new chosen people. We have passed through a new exodus in our baptism. In the desert of this world we are fed with the body and blood of Christ. We are believers. We too cannot afford to be complacent. It is true that God is patient with us and will give us many opportunities to improve ourselves. That is the meaning of the parable of the fig tree in this weekend's gospel. But notice that also Jesus warns that if the tree does not bear fruit in good time, then it will be cut down. We do not know how much longer God will give to each one of us, but God does give us this season of Lent as a grace to be repentant.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**March 22**	**11:00AM**
Marvin Edwardes		Olivia
Wed.	**March 23**	**11:00AM**
Christina Quiapo		Mom & Dad
Thur.	**March 24**	**11:00AM**
Mary Pagni †		Lena McCrossen & Lisa Ruggeri
Fri.	**March 25**	**11:00AM**
Shirley Antonio †		Ed & Mae
Sat.	**March 26**	**4:30PM**
Ray Austria †		Olivia & Marvin
Sun.	**March 27**	**9:00AM**
Thanksgiving		Ed & Mae
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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