

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Patiently Cultivating

God our Redeemer,
you are merciful and gracious.
We often find ourselves grumbling,
struggling in our desire of evil things.
We are slow to repent,
yet your kindness abounds.
You tend to us
as a patient gardener
continues to cultivate and fertilize
his tree
as he waits for his orchard to bear fruit.
Grant that we might remember
that you make us holy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 23, 2025

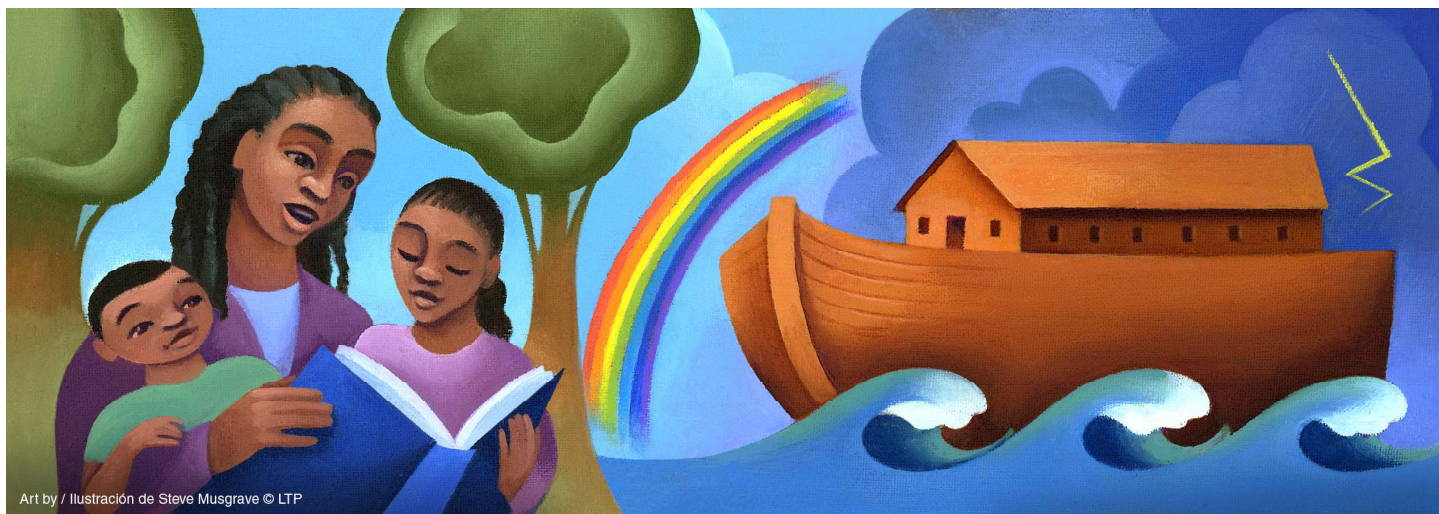
Repent!



Today's readings: Exodus 3:1–8a, 13–15; Psalm 103: 1–8, 11; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 10–12; Luke 13:1–9. Jesus continues to teach about repentance in today's gospel. He says that the Galileans who died at the hands of Pilate and those who died at Siloam are not greater sinners because of their death. Jesus clarifies that their death was not a punishment. If the victims are not greater sinners than those gathered (or any of us), then all must repent and return to the Lord.

Jesus then tells a parable about a gardener. Though many of us are not surrounded by agriculture as were people in Jesus' time, we can still relate to the gardener. Have you ever tended to a plant, a pet, or even cared for a child with a specific hope in mind? Perhaps you hoped your plant would blossom, unlike another plant that did not do so well. You may have hoped that your pet would eat the food set out instead of getting into yet another article of clothing. Or you may have hoped your child would play with the toys you purchased instead of rummaging through the trash again.

It is easy for us to become frustrated or impatient when our hopes are unmet. God, unlike us, meets our continued sinfulness with kindness and compassion. ***It is God's glory always to have mercy.*** Like the gardener who tirelessly cares for the fig tree, God continues to tend to us. Though grateful for God's abundant grace, we are still called to repent and return to God's desire for us. This week, consider how you can actively choose to allow God to cultivate your heart. As we continue our Lenten journey, say yes to God so your heart can blossom.



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This Week at Home

Monday, March 24

Being prophetic

Responding to the call to Christianity is not easy. Jesus tells the people in the synagogue at Nazareth that “no prophet is accepted in his own native place.” We know he will be rejected and crucified for his ministry. We are called to repent, to see God in all things, and to share our faith with others.

This week, reach out to someone you love, and ask to share a prayer with him or her. If your invitation is accepted, lead with a simple prayer. If the invitation is declined, lift up the individual in your personal prayer. *Today’s readings: 2 Kings 5:1–15b; Psalm 42:2–3; 43:3–4; Luke 4:24–30.*

Tuesday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord *(nine months before Christmas)*

Understandably, Mary is “greatly troubled” when the angel Gabriel appears. Still, Mary courageously and faithfully responds yes to God. Her response is much like the words in today’s psalm: “Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.” As you pray today, ask for the humility to hear God and the courage to respond to God. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 7:10–14, 8:10; Psalm 40:7–11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*

Wednesday, March 26

Teach them

Moses reminds the Israelites to observe and teach the Lord’s commandments, to share the goodness of the Lord that they have witnessed with their children and their children’s children. Jesus tells his disciples that “whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.” Say a prayer in gratitude for someone who taught you about your faith. Consider how you can teach others the way of the Lord with your actions and your words. *Today’s readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 27

Harden not your hearts

We are reminded not to harden our hearts when we hear God. Jesus powerfully claims that “whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.” Reflect today on your Lenten journey. Have you taken time to listen to God? How have you responded? Commit to an action that will help open your heart to hear God’s voice: consider an unusual act of generosity, praying at a consistent time daily, or journaling with regularity. *Today’s readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 28

Sinners stumble

Though we stumble, we are challenged to walk the path of the Lord. Jesus’ answers to the query about the greatest commandment guides us in walking the path of the Lord. We are to love God with all our being and, from that, love our neighbor. Today experiment with praying the examen. (Visit The Daily Examen at IgnatianSpirituality.com.) Focus on how you have loved God and your neighbor today and how to resolve to love God and your neighbor tomorrow. *Today’s readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6–17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 29

A heart contrite and humbled

Jesus’ parable encourages us to give God “a heart contrite and humbled.” The Pharisee, haughty and overly confident in being justified, compares his goodness to the tax collector and shares that he fasts, pays tithes, and keeps the commandments. The tax collector, on the other hand, repents and asks for God’s mercy. Acknowledging our sin frees us and gives space for God’s mercy. This weekend, offer God “a heart contrite and humbled.” *Today’s readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–21; Luke 18:9–14.*