

3rd Sunday of Lent
March 24, 2019
“Repentance and Salvation”

Ex 3:1...15

1 Cor 10:1...12

Lk 13:1-9

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Life is always an on-going challenge. Personal development and growth is a process that never ends until the moment of our death. The best of us is far from perfect and has done harm. The worst of us has something wonderful hidden within that, if developed, can completely refashion us for the better. We all have a demonic side that can destroy others as well as ourselves – And we all have better angels that can be a blessing for even more than just those around us!

Life was an on-going challenge for Moses. As a rescued Jewish infant, raised in the court of Pharaoh, he enjoyed every privilege. However, Moses killed an Egyptian slave-driver and had to flee for his life. He wandered far to the East and, eventually, became a shepherd.

Moses had been humbled. His former life had been destroyed. There was a price on his head in Egypt. He knew he was a sinner. Nevertheless, God summoned him and called him to a seemingly impossible task. Moses was to lead a very resistant and fickle-hearted people out of Egypt – And he was to convince the Pharaoh to let them go!

God had a plan for Moses, despite all of his inadequacies, shortcomings, and sins. But Moses would have to believe and trust that God would, somehow, enable him to accomplish all that was asked of him!

The Gospel of Luke recounts how some Galilean worshippers were slaughtered by Pilate while offering sacrifice to God. Some people presumed that those killed must have been great sinners to have such a fate befall them. But Jesus tells them that they are wrong. Those killed were no worse sinners than themselves. The same was true for those killed by the collapsing tower at Siloam. What is important was that the people around Jesus must realize that life can end at any moment. Furthermore, in that instant, we will appear before

God to give an accounting for ourselves. Therefore, it is imperative to be ready for that encounter at every moment, because our life here is so tenuous and can end so unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, Jesus holds out hope for even the worst of us in the parable of the fig tree. The gardener is Jesus himself, who intercedes with the owner who is God. The tree is spared for a time, cultivated with special love and care – and, then, given another chance to bear fruit. It can become all that it was created to be!

As Moses was the great intercessor for the people with Pharaoh and, later, with God – so is Jesus the great intercessor for every human person, past, present, and future. This is what Paul is trying to teach us in his Letter to the Corinthians.

Paul is saying that the life and suffering of Jesus were present to the Chosen People in the desert. Their sustenance and salvation were included in all that Jesus did for the world – Because what Jesus did reaches backward and forward until the end of time here. Unfortunately, the Chosen People grumbled; they complained; they rebelled. Hence, most of them never reached the Promised Land!

St. Paul sees this as a lesson for us who, ourselves, continue to fail in so many ways. We fail despite our Baptism, despite belonging to the New People of God, despite the Manna of the Eucharist, despite having Jesus as the Rock who is the source of all life from God! Consequently, we can still fail to reach the Kingdom of Heaven if we fail to look deeply within our hearts and repent. We must repent of all those things which go against the Gospel and are outside of the way of Jesus!

Brothers and Sisters, probably the greatest challenge in life is to discover the truth about ourselves and then become what God created us to be. It's always hard to see and then admit our hidden sins. But we must do so and then truly repent. God knows everything. God knows who and what we really are. Lent is the time to see ourselves as God sees us – as His children, as flawed, as underdeveloped, as in need of repentance, change, and growth. But Lent is also the time to allow the grace of salvation, brought to us by Jesus, into our hearts.

So, let us pray for the courage and the resolve to become all that God desires us to be!

Amen.

March 24, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra