

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**My eyes are always on the Lord,
for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor.**

COLLECT

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our
lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our
conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and every.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Exodus 3:1-8. 13-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro,
his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his
flock to the far side of the wilderness and
came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There
the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the
shape of a flame of fire, coming from the
middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was
the bush blazing but it was not being burnt
up. “I must go and look at this strange sight,”
Moses said “and see why the bush is not
burnt.” Now the Lord saw him go forward to
look, and God called to him from the middle
of the bush. “Moses, Moses!” he said. “Here
I am” he answered. “Come no nearer” he
said. “Take off your shoes, for the place on
which you stand is holy ground. I am the
God of your father,” he said, “the God of
Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of
Jacob.” At this Moses covered his face, afraid
to look at God.

And the Lord said, “I have seen the
miserable state of my people in Egypt. I
have heard their appeal to be free of their
slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their
sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the
hands of the Egyptians and bring them up
out of that land to a land rich and broad, a
land where milk and honey flow.”

Then Moses said to God, “I am to go, then,
to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The
God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ But
if they ask me what his name is, what am I
to tell them?” And God said to Moses, “I Am
who I Am. This” he added “is what you must
say to the sons of Israel: ‘The Lord, the God
of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God
of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me
to you.’ This is my name for all time; by this
name I shall be invoked for all generations to
come.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 102

Response:

The Lord is compassion and love.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. **(R.)**

2. It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grace,
who crowns you with love and
compassion. **(R.)**
3. The Lord does deeds of justice,
gives judgement for all who are
oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses
and his deeds to Israel’s sons. **(R.)**
4. The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
For as the heavens are high above the
earth
so strong is his love for those who fear
him. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 10:1-6. 10-12

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

I want to remind you, brothers, how our
fathers were all guided by a cloud above
them and how they all passed through the
sea. They were all baptised into Moses in
this cloud and in this sea; all ate the same
spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual
drink, since they all drank from the spiritual
food and all drank the same spiritual drink,
since they all drank from the spiritual rock
that followed them as they went, and that
rock was Christ. In spite of this, most of them
failed to please God and their corpses littered
the desert.

These things all happened as warnings for
us, not to have the wicked lusts for forbidden
things that they had. You must never
complain: some of them did, and they were
killed by the Destroyer.

All this happened to them as a warning,
and it was written down to be a lesson for us
who are living at the end of the age. The man
who thinks he is safe must be careful that he
does not fall.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of
God!**

**Repent, says the Lord,
for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of
God!**

GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Some people arrived and told Jesus about
the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled
with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to
them, “Do you suppose these Galileans who
suffered like that were greater sinners than
any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you.
No; but unless you repent you will all perish
as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the
tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you
suppose that they were more guilty than all
the other people living in Jerusalem? They
were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent
you will all perish as they did.”

He told this parable: “A man had a fig tree
planted in his vineyard, and he came looking
for the fruit on it but found none. He said to
the man who looked after the vineyard, ‘Look

here, for three years now I have been coming
to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding
none. Cut it down: why should it be taking
up the ground? ‘Sir,’ the man replied ‘leave it
one more year and give me time to dig round
it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if
not, then you can cut it down.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial
offerings,
and grant that we who beseech pardon for our
own sins,
may take care to forgive our neighbour.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God.**

**Blesses are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive the pledge
of things yet hidden in heaven
and are nourished while still on earth
with the Bread that comes from on high,
we humbly entreat you, O Lord,
that what is being brought about in us in
mystery
may come to true completion.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your
faithful,
and in your kindness grant your servants this
grace:
that, abiding in the love of you and their
neighbour,
they may fulfil the whole of your commands.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

24 MARCH 2019

Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: Purple • Psalter Week 3

**The first part of our Gospel reading
today reflects a common doctrine
of retribution which teaches that
good behaviour is rewarded and
sin is punished – in this life.**

As in other places in the gospel tradition,
Jesus mentions but does not question this
understanding. The two physical disasters
referred to are not described anywhere
else, but Pilate was certainly capable
of ruthless action. The call to repent, to
change one’s outlook and manner of life
is made to everyone: everyone, therefore,
is a sinner. Jesus tells his audience not
to assume that they are less in need
of repentance just because nothing so
calamitous has happened to them. Jesus’
death on the cross in Jerusalem, where
Siloam is situated, will be such a scandal
precisely because it can be seen as a
punishment for sin.

Death brings judgment. One aspect of
these two tragedies is that they were
unexpected, and those who were killed
had no time to prepare themselves. This
introduces an urgent note: people should
not put off accepting the word of Jesus the
prophet.

The parable of the fig tree softens this
message somewhat: it suggests that people
still have time to sort themselves out. But
this period is not unlimited, and if the Lord
finds them wanting at his coming, then
they will be cut off. The word of the prophet
demands an answer: to delay accepting
the message and its consequences will be
regarded as a negative reply and treated
accordingly. ■

LEARN

Pilate was a cruel and ruthless
ruler, quite capable of ordering
the kind of massacre which is
mentioned in today’s Gospel reading.

No other Gospel writer mentions this
slaughter of Galileans at worship.

Siloam is the name of a pool in Jerusalem. It
is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel.

The Book of Deuteronomy teaches that
good is rewarded and sin is punished: this is
known as the Doctrine of Retribution.

SAY

The Lord is compassion and love.

REPENT – OR ELSE (?)

(LUKE 13:1-9)

REFLECT

The word of God is alive and active: it speaks to us today when we listen to it
being read in church or read it quietly for ourselves. The purpose of today’s
reading is not to frighten us into being outwardly good for fear of being caught
unawares, then finding ourselves being held to account in some divine court. It is
perhaps a reminder that we should not take life and time for granted. In a society
where life expectancy seems to lengthen all the time, we may be inclined to think that
we have plenty of time ahead of us.

Today’s Gospel is not telling us that we should live in an atmosphere of impending
doom: rather this time of Lent is a yearly opportunity to examine our lives and
attitudes. We might reflect on the second part, that of the landowner inspecting the
fig tree, and be relieved that in Luke’s version of the story, the fig tree is not cursed
or cut down immediately, but is given another chance. We should take this seriously.
Jesus tells us that it is not enough simply to acknowledge him as Lord, but that we
should be ready to receive him whenever he comes and knocks at our door. We will
be ready if we are truly his disciples, living by our Master’s teachings, not out of fear
or punishment or hope of reward, but out of loving commitment to our Saviour. The
drawback with acting out of fear is that it wears off and the person slips back. Love is
the key to the covenant relationship, and Lent is the time when we are asked to look at
our relationship with the Lord and to prepare in a meaningful way to celebrate his love
for us revealed in the Easter mystery. ■

DO

Remember that the three practices of Lent
are prayer, fasting and almsgiving (in that
order). Is your Lenten penance making the
Lord nearer to you in your daily life? If your
penance only makes you more conscious
of yourself, it is not too late to choose
something more appropriate.

