

# PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

## Gospel for the Third Sunday of Lent

### March 24, 2019

#### Luke 13:1-9

##### Day One: Luke 13:1-3

*Reflection question:* The crowd tells Jesus about a group of people they think of as worse sinners than themselves. Jesus redirects their attention to themselves and their need for repentance. When have you experienced Jesus calling you to repentance? What did you do?

##### Day Two: Luke 4:4-5

*Reflection Question:* Jesus again calls the crowd to focus on themselves and their personal need for repentance. How do you avoid the temptation of distraction, to see where Jesus is calling you to change?

##### Day Three: Luke 13:6-7

*Reflection Question:* The owner asks the gardener to cut the fig tree down as it has no fruit. How would you respond to the owner? Would you give the fig tree a second chance?

##### Day Four: Luke 13:8-9

*Reflection question:* The gardener describes how we would tend the fig tree, in hopes that it would bear fruit. If Jesus were the gardener, and you the fig tree, how might he feed and nurture you this Lent?

##### Day Five: Luke 13:1-9

*Reflection question:* As you read the entire passage today, imagine yourself in the scene. How are prompted to respond to the call to repent this Lent?

#### How to Pray Each Day

##### Pray:

“Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there.”—Guigo II, the Carthusian (ca. 1113-1193)

##### Read the day’s passage once, slowly:

Take 2-3 minutes to ponder the passage. Note any phrase, word or image that stands out for you.

##### Read the passage a second time slowly:

Take a few minutes to ponder the passage again. Stay with the text: Why do you think the words or image stand out the first time? Is your mind drawn to another part of the text?

What do you think God is trying to tell you through the text today?

##### Consider the Reflection Question:

Jot down any thoughts or responses you have to this question—also make note of any questions that rose from the text.

##### Pray

1. Take a few minutes to be still and present to God.
2. Share your thoughts, questions with God.
3. Is God “speaking” to you? Remember: it may not be a voice you hear but a nudge, a consolation or an insight. If you are keeping a journal, you may want to write these down.
4. When you feel done, say a quick prayer thanking God for this time with him.

## Optional Small group session to follow these daily reflections:

### **Pray** the following prayer or one in your own words

“Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there.”—Guigo II, the Carthusian (d.1297)

*Allow each person to reflect upon their encounters with the Word this past week. They may wish to review any notes or journaling they did at that time.*

### **Read**

- Have one person read the complete passage twice, with a 1-2 minute pause between readings.
- Allow time for silent reflection.
- What stands out when you hear the text, altogether? Is it something that stood out before, or is it something new?

### **Meditate**

- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate with you in some way??
  - Sit quietly with God and wait for his response.

### **Ponder**

- Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words from Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus:

The conclusion of the Gospel passage reverts to the prospect of mercy, showing the urgent need to return to God, to renew life in accordance with God. Referring to a custom of the time, Jesus presents the parable of a fig tree planted in the vineyard. However, this fig tree was barren, it produced no fruit (cf. Lk 13: 6-9). The dialogue that develops between the master and the vinedresser shows on the one hand the mercy of God who is patient and allows human beings, all of us, time in which to convert; and on the other, the need to start to change both our interior and exterior way of life straight away in order not to miss the opportunities that God's mercy affords us to overcome our spiritual laziness and respond to God's love with our own filial love.

—homily, March 7, 2010

### *Reflection questions:*

- How has God been patient with you this Lent so far?
- What changes are you being prompted to make, so that, in time, you can bear fruit?

### **Discuss**

Allow each person to share what they encountered in their prayers this past week as in this session. They can respond to any question from their daily reflection or this session; or share an insight or experience that rose out of their prayer.

As the discussion draws to a close, ask if there are any needs members would like the group to pray for. If it is possible, at this time move to a chapel or the church for the closing prayer.

### **Pray**

- Allow a time of silent prayer, allowing each person to offer their own silent prayers of praise and thanksgiving, petition to the Lord.
- Allow additional time to sit in the Lord's presence.
- If possible and appropriate, allow each person to offer any prayers aloud.
- Close with prayer as is the custom of your community. It could be: a spontaneous prayer, a parish prayer for renewal said together, an Our Father, Glory Be or prayer to the patron saint of the parish asking his/her intercession, etc.