

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Courting Spiritual Disaster



The recent Taiwan earthquake that left many dead was reported as a tragedy and a natural disaster, but in Biblical times it would have had a different resonance altogether. In Biblical days there were those who feared that disasters were God's punishment on those who had led sinful lives. Jesus sweeps aside the inference. Of course those who have died in disasters have not brought about their own demise. God is not in the business of dishing out vengeful punishments, he is in the business of giving out second

chances and clean slates. Having said that, Jesus' reassurance comes with a word of warning.

What did the victims of the earthquake, and the disasters mentioned in today's gospel reading have in common? None of those victims could have suspected when they left home that morning that they were about to live out their last day. How many of those victims would have lived life differently if they had known they were about to die? Armed with the knowledge of exactly the hour and the day we were to depart this world we would put our relationships in order and live out any unfulfilled ambition. Today's gospel is one of urgency. God gives us chance after chance, but inevitably there will be a last chance and we cannot court spiritual disaster by not being prepared.

So in what ways do we court spiritual disaster? Jesus tells us a parable about a fig tree. The fig tree draws nutrients from the soil for three years, yet bears no fruit. The owner becomes exasperated at how useless the tree is and demands it be cut down, but the gardener suggests giving the tree another chance. We are like that fig tree if we live useless and selfish lives, but God, like the caring gardener in Jesus' parable is always ready to give us a second change and fresh opportunity. The past we are told doesn't have to equal the future. We can change.

Jesus tells us "Repent or perish!" It sounds like a threat but in fact it's a simple reality. We will perish spiritually if we don't live out useful lives. We are invited to look again at skills and talents that up until today we may have ignored, failed to cultivate or used to the wrong ends. How can we live more fruitful lives? How can we become life's selfless givers instead of life's selfish takers?

***PARISH PRAYER - Father, pour out your Spirit upon our parish. Grant us a new vision of your glory, a new faithfulness to your Word, and a new consecration to your service; that your love might grow among us and your Kingdom come.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen***

Useful links: Diocesan Website: <http://www.rcdea.org.uk>
Notre Dame High School, Norwich: Website <http://www.ndhs.org.uk>

PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART AND ST MARGARET MARY [Reg. Charity 278742]

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28TH FEBRUARY 2016 - 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday Masses – Page 160 of Parish Mass Book

Saturday 6.00 pm

Sunday 9.00 am

11.00 am

Music for Sunday Masses - Setting: Dom Gregory Murray Mass

Entry 6pm – *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 892 – The Lord hears the cry of the poor ...

Gospel Acclamation – Hymn 184 – Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory

Offertory Hymn 931 – O living water, refresh my soul ...

Communion *Instrumental Interlude/Sacred silence ...*

Recessional 11am – *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 779 – O God, you search me and you know me

CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION - Saturday at 5.30 - 5.55 pm

Weekday Mass Times (3rd week of Lent) [Psalter Week 3]

Mon.	No Mass Today	- Lent Feria
Tues.	10.00 am	Eucharistic Service - St David, Patron of Wales (Feast)
	7.30 pm	Queen of Peace Prayer Group – in Emmaus Room
Weds.	10.00 am	Eucharistic Service - Lent Feria
Thurs.	No Mass Today	- Lent Feria
Fri.	No Mass Today	- Lent Feria
	5.45 pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Silent Adoration
	6.15 pm	Evening Prayer (Vespers)
Sat.	No morning Mass	- Lent Feria
	6.00 pm	- 4 th Sunday of Lent (Lætare Sunday)

The Parish Newsletter (incl. back copies) is available to view on the parish website from Friday onward each week.

Anniversaries this week: Dorothy Anne Gordon, Michael Joseph Carroll, Thomas Arbuthnot, Billy Reavey and Thomas Donaghue. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Hospital Visits – If you or family members are admitted to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (NNUH) or Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII), King's Lynn, and would like a visit from the Roman Catholic Chaplain, please call either St John's Cathedral, Norwich (01603 624615) for visits to NNUH, or Fr Peter Rollings (01553 772220) for visits to QEII. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick before going to hospital, please contact Fr. Brendan on 01362 694066.

Sick List - Please pray for: Joan Blakiston, David Peek, Michael Reavey, Robert Nicol, Doreen Kanssen, Shirley Liebenhals, Sarah Chaudri, Anne & Derek Williams, David & Anna Thompkins, Michelle Smith, Rita Smith, Rhonda Darby, Collette Barrow-Nessian, Eileen Brockleby, Pat Howe, Kathleen (Jenny) Rudd and Pat Grout.

Money Matters – The collection last weekend was £454 and the collection for CAFOD Lent Fast Day was £562.22. Thank you all very much for your generosity.

Mission Appeal - This weekend, the Spiritans (Holy Ghost Fathers) will be making their Mission Appeal at all Masses.

Diary Dates for this week –

- Weds. 2nd Mar – SVP meets at 2.00pm in Emmaus Room
- Fri. 4th Mar. – SVP 'First Friday' monthly Coffee Morning – 10.30am. All welcome.
- Sat. 5th Mar. – Saturday Club meets - 11.00am in Emmaus Room

Forthcoming Diary Dates –

- Weds. 9th Mar – UCM meeting at 2.00pm in Emmaus Room
- Weds. 9th Mar – Stations of the Cross at 2.30pm led by UCM
- Sun. 13th Mar – Stations of the Cross at 5.00pm led by SVP
- Sun. 20th Mar – Stations of the Cross at 5.00pm led by the Prayer Group

Saint David - 1st March - Particularly relevant to us today in the 21st century, Saint David is a model to us on living simply and sustainably.

Dereham Churches Together – 1st March – Dereham Churches Together invite you to an Evening of Praise, Prayer and Fellowship hosted by Dereham Baptist church on Tuesday 1st March at 7.30 pm. Leaflets are at the back of the church. It was our turn to host this event, but as I am away we will host it later in the year.

Women's World Day of Prayer – Friday, 4th March at 2.30pm at St Nicholas Church, Dereham - The Dereham Branch of the Woman's World Day of Prayer will be holding this year's service at St Nicholas Church, Dereham, this Friday, March 4th at 2.30pm. The speaker is Rev. Betty Trinder who will talk on this year's theme, which has been prepared by the Ladies of Cuba, entitled: *'Receive Children. Receive Me.'* World Day of Prayer is a global, ecumenical movement of Christian women joined together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday of March. The theme 'Receive

children. Receive me' reflects St Mark's Gospel, chapter 10 verses 13-16, which is the focus of the service and a reminder that everyone is a child of God and equally worthy of our love and respect.

Lent Station Mass for our Deanery – 8th March - This will be celebrated by +Alan at St. John's Cathedral on March 8th. All the priests of the Deanery are expected to be present and there will be an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 6.00 pm. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Mass and then at 8.00 pm refreshments will be available. This will be a good opportunity to go to confession before Easter. You could also make the journey through the **Holy Door** during this visit. Please see the posters at the back of church.

Chrism Mass - The Chrism Mass at the Cathedral will be on Tuesday 22nd of March at 7.00 pm. There will be a list put up for names for the coach as usual.

A evening of quiet prayer for healing in this Jubilee Year of Mercy at Clare Priory - On Thursday, March 10th (between 7.00pm and 8.30pm) we have another of our evenings entitled "Come to me all who are burdened and I will give you rest". These evenings offer you the opportunity to experience *quiet prayer for healing of the hurts of life*. It will be a peaceful and reflective time with the opportunity, for those who wish, to be prayed with individually in silence. And there will be no expectation for you to say anything or take part in anything you may just sit quietly. To book a place please phone Kathy at the Priory. 01787 277326. There is no charge but we do need to know the number to expect. For those who live at a distance it is possible to stay overnight at the Priory.

Teaching Vacancies - St Benedict's School, Bury St Edmunds requires x2 Assistant Headteachers from September 2016. Please see Diocesan Website for more details: www.rcdea.org.uk

Fairtrade Fortnight - 29th February - 13th March - This year's theme will be BREAKFASTS! - "Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world" (*Martin Luther King*). We are connected to the farmers who produce our breakfast foods and drinks, as well as the impact our choices make on farmers and their communities. An invitation to include a Fairtrade product in your long term breakfast habits.

Bite Size

'When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, "I used everything you gave me." '

Erma Bombeck