

FAITH @Home

www.waterfordlismore.ie

"To the Heights" Post-Primary Schools / Youth Edition also available
20 MARCH 2022 | VOL. II ISSUE 16

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love
in the heart of the family!



Find us on Facebook



Follow us on Instagram!



Subscribe to us on YouTube



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Year C

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Exodus 3:1-8,13-15

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 102(103):1-4,6-8,11

Second Reading:

1 Corinthians 10:1-6,10-12

Gospel:

Luke 13:1-9

"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."



Carl Bloch, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) of Moses and the Burning Bush for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we hear Jesus remind us that God loves everyone; He doesn't have favourites. All are called to repent and be with Him forever in Heaven.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Do you feel you are bearing the kind of fruit in your life that God knows you are capable of? Are there areas of your life that need pruning?
- Spend a little time reflecting on just how much God loves you and wants you to feel that love. He's like a loving gardener, who continues to tend and care for the fig tree, believing it can bear fruit. Ask Him for the grace you need to respond to that care.

Talk

In this week's Gospel, we hear about the parable of the barren fig tree, an image of God's faithfulness and hopefulness.

- Have you ever planted anything in the garden? Have you any Spring flowers like daffodils in your garden? Have you ever seen the bulbs they grow from? They don't look like they'll produce such colourful flowers, but there's so much hope contained in them, and even in tiny seeds!
- Think about today's story: what did the property owner want to do? What did the gardener want to do? What qualities did the gardener show?
- In what ways do we need to change this lent? What things still need to be pruned from our lives and habits? God is like the gardener, because He is always hopeful we can change and grow - He never gives up on us.

Family Challenge!

Look out for daffodils, snowdrops and other Spring flowers this week. Every time you see them, thank God for the reminder that He never gives up on us, but always wants us to grow closer to Him! Why not get a nice bunch of daffodils to bring inside too!

Mission: What kind of things do plants need to grow? Good soil, water, sunshine. Our souls need help to grow too: prayer, helping others, loving God – these all help us to grow! Say an extra prayer every day this week asking Jesus to help your heart grow in love for Him this Lent!

Song of the Week!
THE LENT SONG



Prayer... always presupposes effort - Catechism of the Catholic Church

SHOW UP IN PRAYER

When we hear the parable of the fig tree, we might first be struck with the cold and brutal reaction of the property owner: it's not bearing fruit, cut it down! Then we hear the gardener's plea for more time to nurture and prune, full of hope in its possibility to bear fruit. How does this apply to us? God loves us, He cares for us, He never gives up on us. He wants us to respond to His love with ours, because when we let the love of God into our lives, great things can happen! We blossom into the people He has created us to be.

Trying to do this all on our own is impossible. We need God's grace to show us what needs to be pruned and what we need to change. If we're in a healthy relationship with God, these things will come more naturally to us. Prayer is that relationship. Is prayer easy? Not always. It takes effort, dying to ourselves and our own wants and desires, making a commitment and living it out – like the gardener working on the fig tree. Through the effort of prayer, we tune our hearts to God's heart, and become more like Him, and when we're more like Him, we'll draw others close to Him too!

Decide this week to engage in the battle of prayer. Set aside specific parts of your morning and evening that you will give to God, and stick with them. As Fr Mike says, show up, stay there and be as present to God as you can possibly be. Start small – even just five minutes at a time. Put away your phone. Ignore distractions and ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to come closer to God.

VIDEO: [Why is Prayer So Hard? \(Fr Mike Schmitz\)](#)

TUNE: [Into Faith I Go - Pat Barrett](#)

RESOURCE: [The Battle of Prayer](#)



Family Prayer

Lord, thank you for your patient and loving heart. Show us this week how to prune, water and nourish our faith lives so that we can grow closer to you this Lent. Amen

EVENTS

"Show us the Father" - Lenten Retreat at Holy Family Mission, March 25 - 27. More info: (052) 6133181 / info@holymission.ie

"Let us be the Church of Hope" Prayer Vigil led by the Sisters of Mary Morning Star, Fri 25th March 7pm. Adoration from 3pm-9pm. Friary Church, Lady Lane, Waterford. 087 6077173

Silent Retreat preached by: Fr. Kilian Byrne, Foyer of Charity at Glencomeragh House, April 18-24, Cost €380 full board. Contact Helen 086 1678027 / hellywilliams@gmail.com

One-Day Healing and Renewal Retreat for Married Couples of All Ages: Sun 10th April, 10am - 4pm, Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House. €75 per couple including three course dinner, teas and coffees. Booking essential. For more info: (052) 6133181 or info@holymission.ie

Arise Family Conference: A Catholic family conference will be held in Tramore from 17th to 22nd April. Booking essential. More details at www.arisefamilyconference.ie

GOD REFUSES TO ABANDON US

Now into the third week of the Season of Lent, our Sunday Gospel prepares us to hear Lent's call to conversion and repentance.

Luke tells us that some among the crowds report to Jesus a massacre of Galileans by Pilate. The intention of the crowd seems to be to ask Jesus to explain why these people suffered. It was commonplace to render people's suffering as evidence of their sinfulness. Jesus challenges this interpretation. Those who were massacred were no more or less sinful than the ones who report the situation to Jesus. Jesus replies that even a fatal accident, a natural disaster, ought not to be interpreted as punishment for sin.

Jesus' words at first appear to have a fire-and-brimstone quality. Jesus says in essence, "Repent or perish as these people did; all are sinful before God and deserving of God's punishment." The tone changes, however, in the parable that follows. The parable of the barren fig tree contrasts the patience and hopefulness of the gardener with the practicality of the property owner. When told to cut down the fig tree because it is not producing fruit, the gardener counsels patience. If properly tended, the barren fig tree may yet bear fruit.

Throughout his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus has been teaching about the Kingdom of God. In this parable, we find an image of God's patience and hopefulness as he prepares his Kingdom. God calls us to repent, and it is within his power to punish us for our failure to turn from our sinfulness. And yet God is merciful. He delays punishment and tends to us so that we may yet bear the fruit he desires from us.

This, then, is our reason for hope: Not only does God refuse to abandon us, he chooses to attend to us even when we show no evidence of his efforts. Next week's Gospel will give an even clearer picture of the kind of mercy that God shows to us.

Loyola Press - Sunday Connection

CHECK IT OUT: SYNODAL PROCESS IN THE DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE

Pope Francis has called for a world-wide Synod on Synodality to culminate in Rome in the Autumn of 2023. Simply put 'synodality' means 'journeying together'. One way the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore is encouraging participation currently is an online questionnaire. If you are in the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore, we would love to hear from you. Go to <https://waterfordlismore.ie/pastoral/synod/> [For those in other dioceses, please check your diocesan/parish pages for ways to participate!]



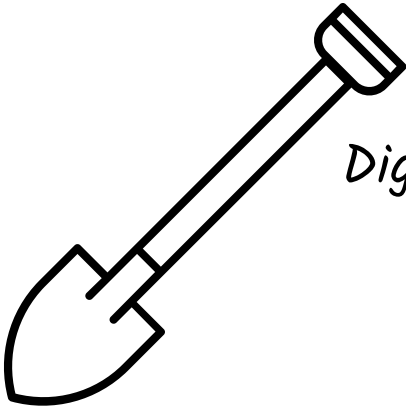
CLICK HERE

What can we do to get closer to Jesus?

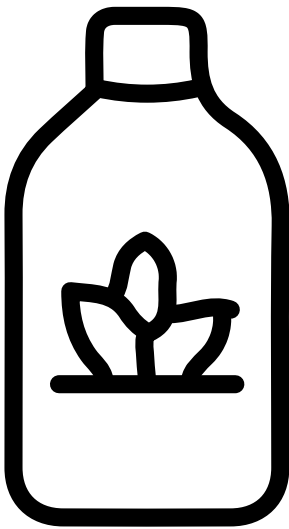
(like the gardener helps the fig tree to bear fruit!)

Write your ideas or draw some pictures!

Luke 13:1-9



Digging the ground: How can we make more time in our lives for Jesus?



Add Fertiliser: What can we do to feed our faith and let it grow?

Add water:

Prayer will keep our faith alive and healthy!



Pull up weeds: What kind of things stop us from being like Jesus?



LUKE 13:1-9

Prayer... always presupposes effort

CHECK OUT WHAT CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE BATTLE OF PRAYER CCC 2725



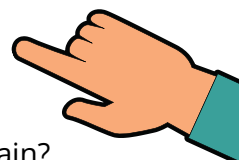
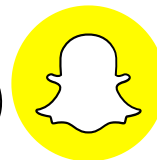
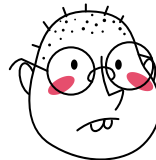
The Battle of Prayer

WOULD YOU RATHER....?

- Lose a toe on each foot
- Eat only your favourite food everyday for a year
- Give up Netflix
- Watch TV
- Chill out on the couch



- OR go bald?
OR never eat your favourite food again?
OR give up Snapchat?
OR go for a walk?
OR go pray?



WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE FIND IT HARD TO PRAY SOMETIMES?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ "WHY IS PRAYER SO HARD" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



As a teen, Fr Mike knew he needed to be a saint, but didn't know _____

He knew he needed to pray, but he didn't know _____

What did Fr Mike read to help him figure out how to be a saint?

When he read the stories of saints, he thought that prayer was really easy for them. He believed it should be as easy as slipping into a _____!



When he read the Catechism of the Catholic Church he realised that prayer can often be a B_____!

The CCC describes prayer as a "gift of g_____" but also a "determined response on our part." Prayer always presupposes e_____.

The great figures of the Old Testament, the Mother of God, the saints and even Jesus Himself teach us that prayer is a _____.



WHO ARE WE BATTLING AGAINST?

Firstly: _____ What is St Paul's conundrum? Romans 7:19



Think: What kind of things can distract people when they feel they should go and pray?

To engage in the battle of prayer we have to f_____, to s_____ up, to s_____ h_____, and while I'm here to be as _____ to the Lord as possible!

Secondly: _____

The battle to pray is a spiritual battle, and the evil one wants to prevent us from praying, because when we pray we:



- come closer _____.
- become the men & women God created _____.
- glorify the F_____, S_____ and H_____ S_____.



THE BATTLE OF PRAYER

LUKE 13:1-9

WE PRAY AS WE LIVE BECAUSE WE LIVE AS WE PRAY

Jesus often went away to a quiet place to pray, but He was always in communion with God.

If a married person is away from their spouse, they should not live as if they're not married, but their spouse should be on their mind and their relationship should form how they act.

If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in His name. This means that the graces of prayer time can't stay restricted to prayer time!

We need to make the i _____, on-p _____ and faithful decision to live outside of prayer the way we want to live _____ prayer. This takes humility, _____ and perseverance.



Now Read Luke 13:1-9



When we hear the parable of the fig tree, we might first be struck with the cold and brutal reaction of the property owner: it's not bearing fruit, cut it down! Then we hear the gardener's plea for more time to nurture and prune, full of hope in its possibility to bear fruit. How does this apply to us? God loves us, He cares for us, He never gives up on us. He wants us to respond to His love with ours, because when we let the love of God into our lives, great things can happen! We blossom into the people He has created us to be.

Trying to do this all on our own is impossible. We need God's grace to show us what needs to be pruned and what we need to change. If we're in a healthy relationship with God, these things will come more naturally to us. Prayer is that relationship. Is prayer easy? Not always. It takes effort, dying to ourselves and our own wants and desires, making a commitment and living it out - like the gardener working on the fig tree. Through the effort of prayer, we tune our hearts to God's heart, and become more like Him, and when we're more like Him, we'll draw others close to Him too!

MISSION!

DECIDE THIS WEEK TO ENGAGE IN THE BATTLE OF PRAYER. SET ASIDE SPECIFIC PARTS OF YOUR MORNING AND EVENING THAT YOU WILL GIVE TO GOD, AND STICK WITH THEM. AS FR MIKE SAYS, SHOW UP, STAY THERE AND BE AS PRESENT TO GOD AS YOU CAN POSSIBLY BE. START SMALL - EVEN JUST FIVE MINUTES AT A TIME. PUT AWAY YOUR PHONE. IGNORE DISTRACTIONS AND ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE GRACE TO COME CLOSER TO GOD.



PRAYER TIME!

Lord, You know that prayer can be hard for me sometimes, but I'm here and I'm trying, and I want to know You more. Tune my heart to Yours and draw me closer to You today, now in this moment. Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON PRAYER THIS WEEK

- Into Faith I Go - Pat Barrett
- Battle Belongs - Phil Wickham
- Every Giant will fall - Rend Collective
- Surrounded (Fight my Battles) - Upper Room
- Heart of God - Hillsong
- Show us Christ - Sovereign Grace
- The Fig Tree - Berci Sisters
- Lead Kindly Light - Audrey Assad

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



11:13 MINS



Fr Patrick Cahill: Plunge into Prayer (Paving the Way Home)

2:33 MINS



Letitia Wright (Shuri from Black Panther) shares her conversion story