



FAITH @ Home

23 MARCH 2025: 3RD SUNDAY IN LENT | YEAR C

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore
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Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

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."



image: canva.com

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](#).

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 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



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!

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

**Don't forget!
The Solemnity of
the Annunciation
is on Tues 25th!**




**Check
this
out**

PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS

Children and young people are innately curious about life. Growing up raises lots of questions, some to do with their experience, both the good and the bad, and some to do with their sense of wonder at the universe we live in and whether there's more to life than meets the eye. Many have an interest in the non-material aspects of life, the spirit or soul, and want to explore how these ideas and experiences help them to develop their own sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. Prayer spaces give children and young people a way to explore personal reflection and prayer for themselves using a selection of engaging and creative activities. These activities can take at school, in the parish, even at home. For more info check out www.prayerspacesinschools.com







CARLO'S CORNER


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.

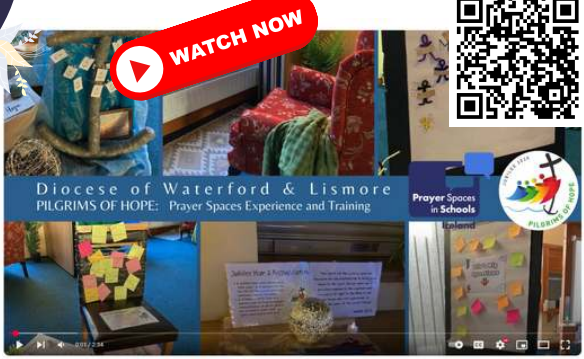
Trying to do this all on our own is impossible. We need God's grace to show us what needs to be pruned and what we need to change. If we're in a healthy relationship with God, these things will come more naturally to us. Prayer is that relationship. Is prayer easy? Not always. It takes effort, dying 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.

 Why is Prayer So Hard? (Fr Mike Schmitz)
 Into Faith I Go - Pat Barrett



To the Heights Youth Resource also available



Diocese of Waterford & Lismore
PILGRIMS OF HOPE: Prayer Spaces Experience and Training

Pilgrims of Hope: Prayer Spaces Experience

Check out the latest video from the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore to see and hear more about the endless possibilities of prayer spaces for young and old!

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