

## Readings for 20th March

### Third Sunday of Lent

#### Collect

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our  
Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for  
ever.

(or)

Eternal God, give us insight  
to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us,  
and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### Isaiah 55.1-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters and you that have no money,  
come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which  
does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.  
See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.  
See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run  
to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will  
abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says  
the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than  
your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

## 1 Corinthians 10.1-13

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.’ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

## Luke 13.1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, ‘Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.’

Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.” ’

## Post Communion

Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Next week's readings: Joshua 5.9.12, 2 Corinthians 5.16-end, Luke 15.1-3, 11b-end*

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