Sunday of Lent

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March 6th 1st Sunday of Lent

“He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bringing us into this country, he gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, I have now brought you the firstfruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.” Deuteronomy 26:8-10

The Israelites knew their God was the Almighty, who brought them out of every trial. They had seen Him work in their own family tree and knew He would continue to work in the days to come. They trusted Him and sang out His praise through the offering of the first fruits of their labor.

Do we, too, boldly trust that He is present here and now in our own trials and that will bring us into a land “flowing with milk and honey”? Let us imitate the faithful who went before us by offering to God the first of our time, our talent, and our treasure in acts of praise and thanksgiving!

March 13th 2nd Sunday of Lent

“The Lord God took Abram outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so,” he added, “shall your descendants be.” Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.”

“When the sun had set and it was dark, there appeared a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, which passed between those pieces. It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram.” Genesis 15:5-6, 17-18

In the 1st reading, God took Abram out to look at the stars in broad daylight! It said the sun did not begin to set until 10 verses later. Therefore, even though the stars were always present, they certainly were not visible yet!

This might seem like a funny scene but what is amazing is that, in this moment, God invited Abram to trust that even when he cannot see the plan, God still has one. Where might we be tempted to despair or minimize the Lord’s power to change a situation? Could it be in our families, our work, our finances? Let
us, too, then trust God with everything we have for even when our eyes cannot see, He has a plan of sheer goodness for us.

March 20th 3rd Sunday of Lent
‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;
it may bear fruit in the future. Luke 13:8-9

Just like the fig tree, we are meant to be fruit-bearers. Whether our hearts are open to be cultivated and fertilized may be a different story! Nonetheless, God has willed each of us into existence out of love, for love, and to love. We each have a unique vocation to love! This begins, first and foremost, through gratitude to God for all he has given us and then pours out through the ways we steward God’s gifts.

How are we being called to bear fruit and where might we need to ask God to cultivate our hearts? Especially during this Lenten season, is our prayer, our fasting, and our almsgiving bearing fruit in our lives or are they just dead fig trees?

March 27th 4th Sunday of Lent
Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away;
behold, new things have come. And all this is from God,
who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation,
‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is probably so familiar to us yet we should never grow tired of it. It is the story of our identity – children of a good, Heavenly Father. When we stop to contemplate this, we recognize what a wild concept it is. The God of the universe calls us His children, welcomes us back when we have strayed, and says “everything I have is yours” when we doubt.

St. Paul reminds us in the 2nd reading that we are “a new creation” through Jesus Christ’s life, passion, death, and resurrection! God has reconciled us back to Himself and given us this same ministry. It begs the question, “what will we do with such a title and such a responsibility?” What needs to be reconciled back to Him that we may act more like His children?

Might it be our first moments of the day in prayer, our family relationships, or our household budget? Let us, then, be attentive to where God is calling us to reconciliation that we may live as a “new creation”!