

### 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR C 2022

#### WARNING AND THE SECOND CHANCE:

The theme of a **second chance** and **warning** runs through all the readings this Sunday. What an opportunity for all of us, to take the second chance we have been given and reflect to see where we need to **repair** our ways and to **repent**. The Church always gives us the chance for **repentance and renewal each year during lent**.

In the first reading we see what we could refer to as **the call** of Moses and his personal **encounter with God in the burning bush**.

When we look into Moses' life up until this point it is clear this call was a second chance given by God. Moses was not called to lead the Israelites because he was smart, intelligent, or pious. He was called to be an **instrument** in bringing about the liberation of God's people.

The three main episodes of Moses' life before this moment were obviously questionable but God still gave him a second chance:

**1-The first episode-Moses saw an Egyptian attacking an Israelite and intervened, overreacted, and killed the Egyptian.**

**2-The second episode-two Israelites were attacking each other, and Moses intervened.**

**3-The last episode-the shepherds of Midian were preventing Jethro's daughters from watering their sheep, and Moses intervened for them.**

These instances tell us that Moses was **concerned, caring, and that he would intervene wherever justice was needed**. Though given a second chance, he has to change and control his extreme emotions and temper as a Leader. God was preparing and training him to handle the tough tribe of Israel and all the hardships in the desert.

We are all called by God and given a second chance in our lives. We are a mixture of **good and evil**. The roots of good and evil are within us all

as human beings...but through the very mercy of God we can always manage them and have another chance.

With goodness and light on the one side we must learn how to be **patient, lenient, kind, and tolerant towards one another...and at the same time we must acknowledge and recognize the dark side within ourselves, and the need to improve.** This is what we call **repentance... God is calling us to change just like Moses, and to lead others through our present day desert to freedom, as children of God.**

This is the call of St. Paul as he reminds the Corinthians, and all Christians, to be **Baptised**, and that **receiving other sacraments** does **not** mean **automatic salvation...**We need to be careful with our faith not to be victims. This is the call of a **second chance with a warning according to St. Paul.**

Jesus Christ echoes the same thing through the parable of today's Gospel. He is sharing a **warning, calling us, and also giving us a second chance.** He is telling us symbolically the parable of the fig tree which never bore any fruit, and the owner threatened to chop it off so that it would not waste any more space or time. The gardener pleaded with the owner to give the tree a **second chance and that he would work on it.** What a good gardener minding the tree, **he wanted to take care of it, work on it, and nurture it by even putting fertilizer on it to give it a second chance...**His attitude is one of love and totally different from the owner of the tree, who was only interested in **fruit without any personal care, and had done nothing about it except to look for the outcome and the end result of fruit.**

The Gardener was **patient, kind, and loving.** Love doesn't give up, love is patient, love doesn't coax, love encourages, love gives a **second chance.** **This care can be seen in the person of Jesus Christ (the gardener).**

How can we be like Jesus (the nurturing gardener) in our daily lives as human beings? You do this already as you are taking care of and bringing up your children (in tending your own “family garden”). When you look at your children are you aware that each child is totally unique with needs and to be treated according to their understanding and capability?

What about looking a little further at all other people as being unique and created differently with different gifts? Some are strong and others weak, yet all are created in the image of God. All are lovable and all respond according to their capability.

This is Jesus’ way extended to each sinner, He cared for them and loved them, and created a nurturing **environment** for them to **repent and be forgiven, thus changing their hearts.**

The real message for this parable is that **God is patient with each sinner, He always gives them a second chance.** The Church is full of so many fig trees which were once barren but when given the second chance they became fruitful. The likes of **St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola,** and so many others...

We too are called to be Gardeners to others...to have **patience with them...to correct their mistakes...to care for them...to not give up on them...and to give them a second chance...**through this they will **bear fruit.**

God is calling us wherever we are. He is with us, **hence it is holy ground, because God is present, hence be reverent and respectful of what God has created.** His presence and our limitations meet but His **mercy prevails always. He can be encountered in all places,**

**mountains and burning bushes, and above all in the midst of our ordinary lives.**

**MAY THAT BURNING BUSH SURROUND US WITH HIS PROTECTION!!**