

Bearing Fruit or Perishing

Third Sunday of Lent/C

March 24, 2019

Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15; 1 Cor 10:1-6, 01-12; **Lk 13:1-9** (Our world belongs to us and God has endowed us with the responsibility of bringing it to perfection.)

“But I tell you, if you do not repent you will all perish as they did.”

Both the gospel and our bishop’s remarks are trying to arrest our attention and focus on something we probably would rather not. In the case of what the bishop said it’s quite straightforward; in the case of Jesus it is not so straightforward. We may be tempted to think that human life has some built-in meaning or purpose that is fulfilled willy-nilly. Jesus is trying to ward us off that assumption. So he says, “But I tell you, if you do not repent you will all perish as they did.” Here **perishing means dying without having lived**. Do people perish? Apparently. Really living involves a purposeful choice, here called “repentance,” although the Greek word, *metanoia*, includes change of mind, change of attitude, and change of direction. **Jesus** is trying to wake up his audience, **encouraging them to become intentional in the way they live and thus make a difference in the world**. That is his hope. That is his focus that his followers will make a difference in the world.

Now this is quite different from the world’s agenda. **The world’s agenda is about living as you please, consuming as much as possible and not thinking about consequences**. And I have to say, we have all been brainwashed in that agenda since the first day we sat in front of a television. Now the speed of life is so fast that many get caught up in the whirlwind and just keep going. **The sad thing is they never get around to bearing fruit, the goal of a purposeful life, bearing fruit. Those who intentionally join forces with God eventually bear fruit. Eventually their lives bring some saving grace to others and move humankind into a closer union with God**. That’s the mission of the disciple; that’s the mission of the Church; that’s the mission of this parish. We need to remember that **our world belongs to us and God has endowed us with the responsibility of bringing it to perfection**. If we don’t even try, then we shall likewise perish.