

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, March 23, 2025
Third Sunday of Lent
Cycle C

A famous story tells of the devil training his young demons. He asks them, “How will you lead souls to hell?” One demon says, “I will tell them there is no God.” Satan replies, “That won’t work. Deep down, people believe.” Another says, “I will tell them there is no hell.” Satan shakes his head. “They know justice must exist.” Then the third one says, “I will tell them: There is no hurry.” Satan smiles. “That will do it.”

Procrastination is one of the greatest spiritual dangers. Many people plan to repent ‘someday’ – but someday never comes. Jesus’ words today shatter the illusion that we have all the time in the world. The people killed in the Gospel story did not expect their lives to end suddenly. Jesus warns us: “If you do not repent, you will all perish as they did.”

This is not divine vengeance – it is “spiritual physics.” If we live in sin, we become spiritually dead. If we love sin, we lose the capacity to love God. Heaven is not a reward for good behavior – it is the natural consequence of choosing holiness. Likewise, hell is not a punishment – it is the natural consequence of choosing sin.

In life, no one is perfectly good or perfectly evil. We all have strengths and weaknesses. But at the moment of death, our choices become final. We will

either be clean or dirty. And what we desire at that moment will be granted forever.

The parable of the barren fig tree teaches us that God is merciful but not permissive. The tree had three years to bear fruit but did not. The owner wanted to cut it down. The gardener interceded: "Give it one more year." This is our story. We have wasted years in sin, but God is offering us one more chance. The question is: Will we use it wisely?

Repentance is not just about avoiding punishment. It is about becoming fruitful. The fruits God wants from us are: Faithfulness and Love that reflects Christ. Some people say, "I don't need Confession. I don't commit big sins." But even small sins weaken our souls. Just as a small crack can weaken a bridge, small sins can lead to spiritual collapse. That is why Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confession is not about shame – it is about healing. It is like taking a hot shower after a long day of hard work. It washes away not just the dirt but the desire for dirt.

This Lent, make a commitment: Go to the sacrament. Let Christ prune your soul so that you can bear fruit. A priest once said, "The greatest tragedy is not that people go to hell – it is that they choose it." Complacency is the enemy of the soul.

The devil does not need to make us reject God outright – he only needs to make us delay our conversion. But the truth is, none of us are guaranteed tomorrow.

Look at your life today: Are you bearing the fruits of holiness, or are you just existing, waiting for “the right time” to change? The barren fig tree was given one more chance, but even that chance had a limit. God is patient, but his patience is meant to lead us to repentance – not to complacency. If we truly desire heaven, then we must live as citizens of heaven now.

Confess your sins.

- + Forgive those who have wronged you.
- + Make time for prayer.
- + Love as Christ loves.

Do not be like the foolish ones who say, “There is no hurry.” The time is now. Lent is not just a season of reflection; it is a season of action. Repent, return, and bear fruit. Because one day, our time will run out. Will you be ready?