



## The Drama of Salvation

Jesus doesn't call you to repentance because he wants to shove your sins in your face. It's quite the opposite. He wants you to be renewed.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells a parable of a fig tree. The owner had the tree planted, but it didn't produce any figs for three years. The owner was fed up with the tree and ordered the gardener to cut it down (cf. Luke 13:1-9). In response to the owner the gardener says, "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."

### Sin Makes us Dull & Boring

Sin makes us dull and boring, just like the fig tree; producing no fruit. Recognizing and repenting of sin is the first step to cultivating our lives and bearing new fruit. And we all know you can't grow new fruit without doing some pruning first. So ask yourself, "What are sinful habits that I need to discard?" In general sins are habits that place a partition between us, others, and God. The root of all sin is pride. When we sin we imply that we know better than God. This is the Original Sin (see Genesis 1, 2 & 3).

### There's No Appeal Process in the Afterlife

Notice the urgency in Christ's tone when he's calling his listeners to repent. Using historical examples of suffering and death Jesus twice says, "If you do not repent, you will perish as they did." (Lk 13:3, 5). There is finality to death that is out of our control. There's no appeal process in the afterlife.

### This is Real Love

Since becoming Catholic I have observed two misconceptions about salvation. On the one hand there is fire and brimstone. God is an authoritative judge who only cares about rules. On the other hand is the God who allows everyone into heaven. If God is an impassionate dictator or the divine equivalent of Barney the Dinosaur he wouldn't be just or loving. "God is Love" (1 John 4:8) because he is merciful. He is also loving because he respects our freedom as rational creatures and does not impose himself on us. If someone with an informed conscience rejects Jesus, why would Jesus shoehorn them into heaven? On the other hand, God gives us rules as signposts for our salvation. We need signs pointing us in the right direction. God wills for everyone to be saved, but many people will ignore the signs and use their own built in GPS (see Matthew 7:13-14) .

This Lent I encourage you to take advantage of the Sacrament of Confession. It's an opportunity to get a spiritual pruning and to be renewed becoming more resilient to sin.

Greg Garda, *Youth Minister*

When tragedy invades our lives and disaster strikes it can shake us to the core, fill us with fear, leave us searching for explanations and questioning why. The Israelites, in the time of Jesus, more often than not saw the vengeance of God at work in unforeseen calamities. The widespread belief in times of flood, famine, plague and pestilence was that this was God's way of venting his anger and of punishing the victims who were simply reaping the rewards of their sinfulness. When queried about the reason for King Herod's ruthless killing of the Galileans offering sacrifice in the temple, Jesus rejects this notion of divine retribution for sinfulness and states that personal misfortune and random disaster can befall anyone. These events are not willed upon us. On the contrary, we can be confident that God who is compassionate and consoling does not abandon his people in their distress. He does not leave us to fend for ourselves but suffers when we endure misery, hardship and death.

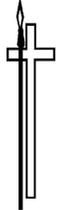
In good times and in bad, we should turn to God for protection and forgiveness for we know neither the day nor the hour when we stand alone in his presence.



## Mass Intentions

Monday	Intentions of <b>Raphael Kwan</b>
Tuesday	Soul of <b>Patrick Power</b> Soul of <b>Catherine Tierney</b>
Wednesday	Soul of <b>Clarence Renaud</b>
Thursday	Soul of <b>Alice Cheung</b>
Friday	Soul of <b>John Frederick Jack Wilson</b>

**PRAYER REQUEST LINE**  
905 881-2786 ext. 250



### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Please join us in in praying the Stations of Cross each Friday evening during Lent at **7:30 p.m.** in the church. All are welcome.



### MARTYRS' SHRINE LENTEN RETREAT

**Journey with the Canadian Martyrs' St. Luke's Parish**

April 9, 10 and 11<sup>th</sup>  
7:00pm – 9:00pm

**Fr. Ahil Raj**

Let the lives of the Martyrs' deepen your relationship with Christ as we journey with them during this Lenten season.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

See the bulletin board for more information.

(Light refreshments will follow in the parish hall)



*Helping the whole community through Catholic agencies*

**2019 PARISH GOAL - \$147,000**

**How can you "Live the Gospel" when life is so busy?**

Many people help those in need by volunteering at a local organization, but if your schedule does not allow for it, you can still make a huge impact in your community by supporting ShareLife funded agencies.

Next Sunday is the first ShareLife collection. Over the next week, please reflect on your ability to "Live the Gospel" by making a sacrificial gift to our parish ShareLife campaign.

**March 31<sup>st</sup> is ShareLife Sunday**

**Please give generously**



### **St. Vincent de Paul EASTER FOOD DRIVE March 30-31 and April 6-7**

*"When I was hungry you gave me to eat, when I was thirsty you gave me to drink....." ( Matthew 25:35).*

You can help feed the hungry by bringing non-perishable food (canned foods, cereals, pasta, rice, baby food, etc.) to the church the weekends of **March 30/31st or April 6/7th.**

Your donations will be sent to the Georgina food bank. Every month, they distribute around 300 hampers of food, helping an average of 800 people.

**THANK YOU!!!**



### THORNHILL MINISTERIAL LENTEN SERIES 2019

*Answering God's Call: to Heal*

**Sunday March 24th at 4:00 p.m.**

Thornhill Baptist Church,  
8018 Yonge Street

Speaker: The Rev. Peter Lisinski  
(Offering to: Yellow Brick House)



### LENTEN CONFESSIONS

**Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
6:30 - 7:30 pm**



The **Tuna Casseroles** for the Good Shepherd Ministries are due on Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup> (last Sunday of the month).

Thank you for your continued support!