**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**

 **Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it**

 **Mass Schedule and Intentions**

**Saturday, March 19, 5:15 Mass + For the repose of the Soul of Dr. Joseph Kattackal by the Family**

**Sunday, March 20, 9:30 a.m. Mass – For World Peace, the Poor and the Parishioners of St. Peter's**

**10:45 a.m. Mass + For the repose of the Souls of Danka and John Lankester by the Morning Mass group and the staff and parishioners of St. Peter’s.**

**Monday, March 21, No Mass – First Day of Spring**

**Tuesday, March 22, No Mass**

**Wednesday, March 23, 8:00 a.m. Mass**

**Thursday, March 24, 8:00 a.m. Mass**

**Friday, March 25, 8:00 a.m. Mass – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**

**Stations of the Cross, 6:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 26, 5:15 p.m. Mass - For World Peace, the Poor and the Parishioners of St. Peter's**

**Sunday, March 27, – Fourth Sunday Lent**

**9:30 a.m. Mass – For World Peace, the Poor and the Parishioners of St. Peter's**

**10:45 a.m. Mass - For World Peace, the Poor and the Parishioners of St. Peter's**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT REFLECTION: This weekend Third Sunday of Lent gospel reading contains material found in no other gospel which raises crucial questions about the justice of God and the need for repentance. We frequently hear about human suffering, suffering inflicted by other people or resulting from 'natural disasters'. Suffering and tragedy have always led to the question 'Why me?' The random nature of human suffering leads many to question the existence of a loving God. What Jesus makes clear in the first part of this gospel passage is that suffering is not necessarily brought about by sin. Those who suffered at the hands of Pilate and in the collapse of the tower of Siloam were no guiltier than their fellows. Jesus does not explain at this point the meaning of innocent suffering. He acknowledges that it is part of the human condition. The answer he will give will be seen on Calvary. The second part of the gospel reading contains the parable of the fig tree. Whereas in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus is seen cursing the fig tree which carries no fruit (Mark chapter 11 and Matthew chapter 21), here in Luke Jesus uses a parable to make the same point. The fig tree symbolises the people and their lack of fruitfulness. The gardener 'intercedes' for the fig tree, recalling the role of Jesus in relation to sinners. The gardener makes his appeal, but we are not told the reply. We may presume that the fig tree was granted a reprieve, but for how many years? How long do we wait before responding to the call of God, the call of conscience? What consolation can a Christian offer in the face of innocent suffering? We here at St. Peter’s pray for openness to learn from the words of Christ. We pray for generosity in living out the gospel.**

 **THE SEASON OF LENT: Historically the origin of Lent is tied to the final spiritual preparation of catechumens for baptism and initiation into the Church at the Easter Vigil. These days of preparation were marked by prayer, fasting and almsgiving or acts of charity. Over time, Christians were so moved by the devotion of the catechumens that they began to join them in these acts in preparation for celebrating the Feast of Easter. Regardless if you are preparing to be baptized or already are, the purpose of Lent remains the same to turn our hearts to the Lord and give some perspective to our lives. Lent is not a season for comfort. It is a season for sacrifice and growth. It calls us to move. And this is the great question we have to ask ourselves: What makes me move, what drives me?**

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**: **each Friday evening during Lent at 6:30 pm. Come and join us as we walk through the fourteen stations to experience this powerful way to contemplate, and enter into, the mystery of Jesus’ gift of himself to us. All are welcome.**

**NOTE: On Good Friday, Stations of the Cross will begin at 7:00 p.m.**

## **Supporting Ukraine: Perhaps this Lent, with our prayers and fasting, we can consider supporting these organizations as part of our traditional practice of almsgiving or charity. Here are three reputable agencies, May Mary Queen of Peace, intercede for an end to the conflict and for those most affected. Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) Help the People of Ukraine Survive the War - CNEWA Canada (cnewa.org) Development and Peace**

**PRAYER FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE:** **Holy and Gracious God We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders. We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear. We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people, life, and life in all its fullness. We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace. We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ. Above all, God, today we pray for peace for Ukraine. And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus Christ. Lord have mercy. Amen.**

**WHAT GROWS IN YOUR GARDEN: “Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none.” How sad to think that the Saviour cannot find fruit in the lives of so many of us who should be producing it. How disappointing it must be to Him to find those who claim His name and never produce any fruit. There is something wrong with a tree that appears to be an apple tree and never yields fruit. It is either not an apple tree or it is sick. Let’s pause and ask ourselves today, how is my tree growing? Are my limbs laden with fruit, or are the buds still tightly closed? If the Lord sought for fruit in my life, would He be pleased or leave empty handed? May our prayer today ask the Lord for His patience as we grow, allowing us the time and spiritual food we need to blossom forth in a bounteous harvest.**