



March 7, 2010 The Third Sunday of Lent

“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. If not you can cut it down.” 13:8-9

Dear Friends;

C. S. Lewis wrote that the devil’s greatest weapon is convincing us that we have all the time in the world to change our lives. We live in a world where people often think in simplistic terms that bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people.

However, for anyone with enough real life experience knows that this is a falsehood. Many evil people thrive while good people are suffering. When terrible natural disasters strike, like the recent quakes in Haiti and Chile, we can see many examples of innocent suffering. It is to such suffering that Luke directs our attention today.

Jesus does not answer directly the question why do bad things happen to good people. But he distances himself from those who propose that these untimely deaths are the direct result of sin and guilt. What he does emphasize is that we need always to be prepared—the end, our end could come most unexpectedly.

I have a friend from Chile whose brother and girlfriend were on vacation in a beach town in Chile when the earthquake struck. Immediately, they were told to leave and run to high ground. They ran as fast as they could. Finally when Augustin and his girlfriend turned they saw the tsunami wave completely inundate and level the town. He is still in shock over the experience.

I recently had a medical procedure and the woman doing the medical intake asked me if I had a personal medical directive and a living will. I had to say no. It has been something that I have intended to do but have not gotten around to it. I thought I would always have time.

It is just such experiences that can help us to focus and realize that we do not have forever to do what needs to be done. The most important thing that Jesus invites us to is to be prepared to live each and everyday the way of love, the way of the Kingdom. Otherwise we could be taken by surprise.

Blessed John XXIII was much older when he had been elected pope in 1958. Shortly after his election a reporter questioned him on how long that he actually thought he might be pope. Pope John responded that he did not know but, “his bags were always packed.”

We are all given time to cultivate a life of loving relationships with God and each other. We need to always live as if each day was our last and emphasize that which is truly important. Let us bear that fruit each and every day.

Peace,

Fr. Ron