



CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES  
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

# On Our Lenten Journey

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

C CYCLE

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible, Candle, Plant or Tree Branch, Scissors or Pruning clippers

## TIMING FOR THE REFLECTION

Timing listed is for one hour. Expand or shorten via the Initial Reflection or Post Video Reflection.

Prayer:	3 minutes
Commitment:	1 minutes
Gospel Reading:	2 minutes
Reflection:	15 minutes
Video:	10 minutes
Post Video Reflection	25 minutes
Closing Prayer	3 minutes

## OPENING PRAYER

*Quiet the group, light the candle, and after a moment of silence, the Leader holds the plant or the branch and says: **Lord, you are the creator of all life. You sow the seed. You nurture the soil with light and food.***

*Pass around the plant or the branch and the scissors, slowly, and invite everyone to cut off a small piece, while stating slowly and deliberately...*

**Leader:** I am the vine.

**All:** I am the vine.

*(pause)*

**Leader:** And you are the branches;

**All:** You are the branches;

*(pause)*

**Leader:** He who abides in me and I in him, will bear much fruit.

**All:** He who abides in me and I in him, will bear much fruit.

**All:** Lord, help us to hear your Word. Help us to be open to the pruning and shaping you do in our lives.  
Be with us now.

Amen.

## COMMITMENT

*Remember back to our group commitment we made at our first meeting together. Let all agree to renew that commitment to respect each other and grow with one another.*

## GOSPEL READING

**Luke 13: 1-9** *The New American Bible*

At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did."

And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none, so cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, '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.'"

## REFLECTION

**Questions for discussion. Pause between each.**

What words do you hear in this Gospel reading that strike you?

The reading says, "*Do you think because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?*" Do we categorize some sinners as worse than others? How?

Do we categorize levels of sin? (Do we consider some of our sins worse than other sins?) Share your thoughts about that.

The gardener asks for time to care for the fig tree so it may bear fruit in the future. How do we know when pruning is occurring in our own lives?

## VIDEO

Ensure all have the ability to see and hear the video for the 3rd week of Lent, highlighting the issue of homelessness. The video features the process used in order for homeless men to obtain shelter at Simpson Housing and St. Stephen's shelters. It also includes John Petroskas, a Catholic Charities employee, who works to house men who have been categorized as "long term homeless".

REFLECTION AFTER THE VIDEO

- What did you hear or see in the video that stands out?
- What is your reaction to what you saw and heard?
- What is your direct or indirect experience with homelessness?
- How are you like the people in the video? How are you different?
- What connections can we make between the gospel reading and the video?
- What questions does this raise for you?

CLOSING PRAYER

*Bring the plant or branch back to the center of the table or hold it up.*

**Reader 1:**

**Lord, you are the creator of all life. You sow the seed. You nurture the soil with light and food.  
Who are we that you have loved us so well?  
When we find our own selves so often difficult to trust, how is it that you love us enough  
to shape us and form us.**

**Reader 2:**

**We have need of your compassion, your power and wisdom.  
Our own has once again proven inadequate  
In the face of so much need.**

**All:**

**Be strong in us. Purify our intentions.  
Deepen our commitment.  
You are the vine. We are the branches.  
We await your saving presence.  
Amen**

Adapted from *More than Words: Prayers and Rituals for Inclusive Communities*  
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