



LENT

Faith Conversations

Week of March 23-29

SUNDAY READINGS: Exodus 3: 1-8, 13-15; Psalm 103; I Corinthians 10: 1-6, 10-12; Luke 13: 1-9

ADULT REFLECTION

In this week's readings we hear about the mercy of God. In the first reading, God sees the suffering of his people enslaved in Egypt, and comes to rescue them through Moses. The Psalm repeats, "The Lord is kind and merciful." In the Gospel, Jesus explains that God does not kill off the unjust but rather, like the hopeful gardener, gives people every opportunity to choose what is right.

A gardener can cultivate and fertilize and prune. But he cannot make a tree bear fruit. Similarly, God makes himself known, shows us the way to live in Jesus, and displays his love in countless ways. He cannot, however, make our choices for us. God wants to be in a loving relationship with each of us. And that requires our free response. If we choose to respond to his love with love, if we remain in him as a branch grafted to the vine (see John 15), then his very own life, love – the Holy Spirit, will dwell within us. The Spirit will give our lives purpose and direction, and make us fully alive and fruitful.

Reflection Questions:

- *Such mercy gently holds us. Will we reach out our roots and branches and let our loving God bear fruit in and through us? How do we do this?*
- *Many Catholics feel a certain uneasiness with God the Holy Spirit. How is your understanding of the Spirit helped by thinking of the Spirit as merciful Love, or as God's own life/breath/power flowing in you?*

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Our Sunday readings teach us about God's mercy. Do you know what mercy is? How would you define it? How have you experienced mercy in your life? What was that like?

How do we experience God's mercy toward us?

How can we show mercy to each other here at home? How can we show it to others beyond our family?



PRAYER

Jesus, you share our humanity. Open our eyes this Lent to see where we tend to push God aside. In flame our hearts with the strength of feeling that will help us rearrange our lives in order to put God first. Amen.



FASTING

What can you take away from your life this week to help put (and keep) God first?



ALMSGIVING

Jesus was angered by injustice. What injustice do you see around you? Choose one action this week that will contribute to making your home, your school/work-place, or community more just.

