

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

**Readings:** Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15  
Ps 103:1-4, 6-8, 11  
1Cor 10:1-6, 10-12  
Lk 13:1-9

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent  
March 7, 2010

**Word:** **Holiness in Christ, our Spiritual Rock, calls for repentance.**

**Theme:** **Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to fall back into sin.**  
[Steadfastness]

**Promise:** ***"He redeems your life from destruction; he crowns you with kindness and compassion."*** (Ps 103:4)

### Reflection:

Everyone was glued to CNN 24/7 over the weekend as a terrifying 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit Chile, said to be 800 times stronger than the one that struck Haiti. Seismologists sent warnings of potentially deadly tsunami to 53 countries along the Pacific Rim, including Hawaii, Japan and even the Philippines. The whole world was once again shaken, as one calamity after another is unleashed upon various parts of the globe. The series of disasters – from raging flood waters to furious snow storms and recurring earthquakes - instill dread in our hearts that we might be in line for the next catastrophe.

Given this scenario, as disciples of Christ, what are we to do? Could this be the Nineveh of our own time and generation, a modern day scenario reenacting Jonah's journey through the city of Nineveh announcing, ***"Every man shall turn from his evil way... God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish."*** (Jonah 3: 8-9). In the today's gospel of Luke, Jesus himself gives a stern warning, ***"But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did."*** (Luke 13:3). Jesus, as we know, was referring to their souls and the need to repair the harm done to their covenant relationship with God.

In the same gospel, Jesus demonstrates the enduring mercy of a loving God through the parable of the fig tree. Despite our unworthiness and lack of fruitfulness, our merciful God offers another chance and opportunity to make amends, ***"...Leave it for this year also and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future,"*** (Luke 13:8). Our lives may be barren like the fig tree, and weakened because sin prevents us from producing any fruit. But the Lord gives us ample chances through His amazing grace, to be nurtured and cared for, until we can come around and show signs of producing fruit in time. He does not want to blame us but wants to save us from being cut down and cast into eternal damnation. Through His infinite patience, God offers forgiveness to repentant souls.

God's mercy and love make it possible for us to turn away from sin and live a new life. But we need to cultivate the seed that has been planted in us, so we can flourish and bear fruit. Our community, Bukas Loob Sa Diyos provides fertile ground and ample opportunities to nurture our spiritual lives through teachings and formation programs, praise and worship, mission work and other spiritual activities, all designed to fertilize the soil of our hearts and enable us to flourish and grow spiritually. As true disciples of Christ, we never stop changing, growing and learning everyday until one day, we reach our final destination.

Nearly three weeks into Lent, the urgent call to repentance is clear. The Greek word for repentance - metanoia - implies a change of heart, a spiritual conversion, a turning around and turning back, in this case, to God. Lent, which runs for approximately forty days, is time well-spent checking the state of our own soul, reflecting, re-evaluating and renewing ourselves. It is God's primary attribute to have mercy upon us as long as we are steadfast in repenting of our sins and have a firm resolve to sin no more.

Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten message for the year 2010 is noteworthy. While focusing on the theme of justice, he nevertheless dwells on the significance of conversion, *"Conversion to Christ, believing in the Gospel, ultimately means this: to exit the illusion of self-sufficiency in order to discover and accept one's own need – the need of others and God, the need of His forgiveness and His friendship."* To elucidate the point, he highlights the importance of humility as a virtue to live by, most especially during the Lenten season. The Pope especially reminds us of the need to humble ourselves, to make a good confession and receive communion during this season, *"...Humility is required to accept that I need Another to free me from 'what is mine,' to give me gratuitously 'what is His.' This happens especially in the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist."*

Amidst the uncertainties we daily confront in the face of global calamities that may come our way without warning, it is reassuring to hold on to God's promise in the book of Psalms, ***"He redeems your life from destruction; he crowns you with kindness and compassion."*** (Ps 103:4). Lent is the time to prepare ourselves, that no matter what happens, we may remain unfazed by the wrath of nature. And when that moment finally comes, we shall neither perish nor be cut down like the barren fig tree.

**Prayer:**

Oh Lord, during this season of Lent, give me the grace to truly repent of all my sins and be reconciled with You and my neighbors. I know that You are a God of second chances and You are intent on saving me. Make this a special time for me to be purified and enlightened that I may bear fruit and be a living witness of Your love and grace. And as I renew my life, keep me close to your bosom that I may never fall away from you ever again. In Jesus mighty name I pray, Amen.

**Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:**

1. Reflect on your own life and ask yourself, are you are a barren fig tree?
2. What do you need to do during this season to show the Lord your repentant heart? How can you sustain your repentant spirit without falling back into sin again?

**Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

March 8, 2010 (Mon):	2 Kgs 5:1-15; Ps 42:2-3, 43:3-4; Lk 4:24-30
March 9, 2010 (Tue):	Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-9; Mt 18:21-35
March 10, 2010 (Wed):	Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19
March 11, 2010 (Thur):	Jer 7:23-28; PS 95:1-2, 6-9; Lk 11:14-23
March 12, 2010 (Fri):	Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6-11, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34
March 13, 2010 (Sat):	Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-21; Lk 18:9-14

***“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”***