



“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.”

LUKE 13:8-9A



## A Gardener God

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

**C**harles Baudelaire was a French poet and essayist in the mid-1800s. He once observed that life is like a hospital in which each patient is possessed by the desire to change beds. In other words, he thought everyone seemed to think life would be so much better if only they had a different set of circumstances, a different job, a different marriage, a different place in life. Like trees, however, not everyone grows and matures at the same pace. There are forty-year-olds who still act and think like teenagers, and there are ten-year-olds who have an attitude toward life like that of an elder. Over time, we all grow into the lives we're given.

In this week's Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, some think God is like the owner who planted the tree, as

if God is impatient with us to begin bearing fruit and quick to uproot us if we fail. A case could be made, however, for God to be the gardener who patiently fertilizes and nurtures. In the beginning, it was God who had a garden called Eden, filled with all kinds of trees and plants among which God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. After the resurrection, it was Mary Magdalene who went looking for the body of Jesus and mistook him for the gardener. It is God who hovers over us, watering and nudging and nurturing, waiting until in God's good time, we begin to bear fruit. ●

### Reflect

***What needs nurturing in my life,  
and what needs weeding out?***



### ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

53 South Road, Paget PG 03 | P.O. Box HM 727, Hamilton HM CX

Pastor: Reverend Joseph F. H. Morley, Vicar General • Cell: 705 0236

Email: [stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com)

Weekend Masses: Vigil: 5:00pm, Sunday: 10:15am

Baptisms: by appointment 3 weeks in advance

Weddings: by appointment 6 months in advance

[www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget) & "LIKE" us | Diocesan Webpage: [www.romancatholicbermuda.bm](http://www.romancatholicbermuda.bm)

#### Parish Administrator:

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# Mass Schedule & Intentions

We welcome our parishioners and visitors who have come to St. Michael's to worship this weekend. May you be blessed by your presence here today.

## MINISTRIES ...

### MARCH 22/23rd - THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

5:00PM Lector: Kathy Anderson EM: Fred Anderson  
10:15AM Lector: Pat Robinson EM: Christine DaCosta  
Collection: Carlos DeFrias

### MARCH 29/30th - THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

5:00PM Lector: Karen Marsh EM: Peter Marsh  
10:15AM Lector: Cherry Ramdass EM: Willie Forbes  
Collection: Karen Marsh

## MASS INTENTIONS ...

### MARCH 22/23rd - THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

5:00PM For the Parishioners of St. Michael's  
10:15AM For Reconciliation in Families, Communities, and the World

### MARCH 29/30th - THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

5:00PM For the Parishioners of St. Michael's  
10:15AM Deolinda & Manuel and Victor Pacheco ++



# Stewardship

sharing the gifts we have been given

March 15/16th COLLECTION: \$824.00

Monthly Maintenance Collection: \$385.00

Donation: \$824.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR STEWARDSHIP

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE  
to St. Michael's Church's: BNTB Account # 2000 6060 081824 100.  
YOUR Weekly, monthly or quarterly transaction is appreciated.

WHEN MAKING YOUR ONLINE TRANSACTION, BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND "COLLECTION" AS YOUR MEMO ON YOUR BANKING TRANSACTION.

## Bishops Corner ...

Dear Fellow-Catholics,

We all know that the three main works of mercy and penitence that we are invited to undertake in the Lenten season are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Also, I am sure that this Lent everyone has resolved himself/herself to observe these Lenten practices on a personal level. It came to my mind, however, that perhaps we should try to do something as a Diocese to assist a poorer church in a missionary country. I have given this project the title of "Diocesan Lenten Almsgiving". It would be beautiful if each year we were willing, as a community of faith, to show this kind of solidarity, support and mercy towards our sisters and brothers who are less fortunate than we are.



This year I would like to direct our Diocesan Lenten Almsgiving to assist Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In September 2023, Fr. Jacob Swapan Gomes spent some time in our Diocese promoting the construction of this Parish Church. You, my dear people, showed an amazing generosity with almost \$20,000.00 being collected for this purpose. Thanks to your generosity the church has been constructed and dedicated by the Archbishop of Dhaka in January 2025. You are able to view photos on the information boards in our churches.

Fr. Jacob is now trying to raise further funds to build the Rectory and the Parish Centre as well as a Parish playing ground to create a decent space for gathering mainly children and youth at the Parish. He will not be continuing with this project as he will hopefully come to minister in our Diocese, but he wants to leave a financial cushion to his successor.

On the weekend of March 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Special Collection in our churches as our Diocesan Lenten Almsgiving. You can also donate online to our diocesan account with Butterfield Bank; Account Name ORCC Special Account 20006060021098100, with the memo BANGLADESH. Thank you for your generosity!

Have a restful weekend and a blessed third week of Lent!

+ Wes

Bishop Wes



LENT 2025 | Reflect. Repent. Restore.

# Pastor's Point . . .

## SECTION IV

### THE CULTURAL OBSTACLES THAT OBSCURE THE SACRED VALUE OF EVERY HUMAN LIFE

Among the obstacles that diminish our sense of the intrinsic value of every human life, the first lies in the notion of “dignified death” as measured by the standard of the “quality of life.” In this utilitarian perspective, life is judged as worthwhile only if it has an acceptable degree of quality, as measured by the possession or lack of particular psychological or physical functions. In this view, a life whose quality seems poor does not deserve to continue. Human life is no longer recognized as a value in itself.

A second obstacle that obscures our recognition of the sacredness of human life is a false understanding of “compassion.” So-called “compassionate” euthanasia holds that it is better to die than to suffer. In reality, human compassion consists not in causing death, but in embracing the sick, surrounding them in their difficulties, in offering them affection, attention, and the means to alleviate the suffering.

A third obstacle is a growing individualism within interpersonal relationships, where the other is viewed as a limitation or a threat to one’s freedom. Individualism, in particular, is at the root of what is regarded as the most hidden malady of our time: solitude or privacy. Those who find themselves in a state of dependence and unable to realize a perfect autonomy or reciprocity, come to be cared for as a “favor” to them. Interpersonal relationships are impoverished, absent of that charity and human solidarity necessary to face the most difficult moments and decisions of life.

This way of thinking undermines the very meaning of life, facilitating its manipulation, even through laws that legalize euthanistic practices, resulting in the death of the sick. In such circumstances, baseless moral dilemmas arise regarding what are in reality mandatory elements of basic care, such as feeding and hydration of terminally ill persons who are not conscious.

Pope Francis has spoken of a “throw-away culture” where victims are the weakest human beings, “discarded” when the system aims for efficiency at all costs. John Paul II described this phenomenon as a “culture of death,” in which a confusion between good and evil materializes. In this culture of waste and death, euthanasia and assisted suicide emerge as erroneous solutions to the challenge of the care of terminally ill patients.

God bless,  


Fr. Joe, Pastor & Vicar General

SOURCE: Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Samaritanus bonus, “On the Care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life” A Compendium, 2020, (USCCB edition) p. 7. Previous weeks have quoted from this document.



## WORDS OF LIFE:

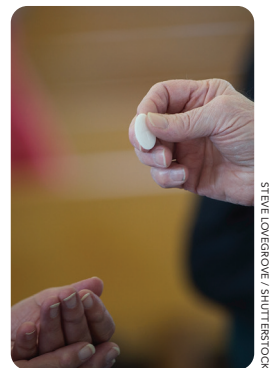
“There is an everyday heroism, made up of gestures of sharing, big or small, which build up an authentic culture of life... Part of this daily heroism is also the silent but effective and eloquent witness of all those ‘brave mothers who devote themselves to their own family without reserve, who suffer in giving birth to their children and who are ready to make any effort, to face any sacrifice, in order to pass on to them the best of themselves’... We thank you, heroic mothers, for your invincible love! We thank you for your intrepid trust in God and in his love. We thank you for the sacrifice of your life” (The Gospel of Life 86).

# Dear Padre,

## *May I receive Communion if I'm divorced and haven't gotten an annulment?*

Yes, you may. Divorce, in itself, is not an impediment to the reception of Communion. Divorce, although regrettable because of the many ramifications that may be part of the experience, is not in itself a sin. There are situations when divorce may be the most loving choice and make it possible for all parties involved to live the lives God is calling them to live. Remarriage, when a person is not free to marry because of the presence of a previous bond, is an impediment to the reception of holy Communion. Although this situation is more and more common, it does not mean that the law of the Church, representative of the teaching of Jesus, can be set aside. As part of the process of healing from your divorce and moving on with your life, you may want to seek an annulment, particularly if you think you might want to marry again. The annulment process can often be healing and a source of great blessing. It also provides a rare opportunity to reflect on what was lost as a result of the original divorce and what can be learned as a way of moving forward and building a second marriage that is strong and life-giving. ●

**Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org**



## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

*I like to think that a nice name for God could be “the God of another possibility”.... [God] does not look at the achievements you have not yet reached, but the fruits you can still bear. He does not keep track of your shortcomings but encourages your potential. He does not dwell on your past, but confidently bets on your future.*

ANGELUS, ROME, MARCH 20, 2022

## What is Happening in Our Diocese?

### St. MICHAEL'S

- EMMAUS Bible Study Tuesdays, at 3:00pm in the Pastor's Office
- FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
  - **Felt Presentation** - Sunday, April 13th, at the 10:15 Mass
  - **First Penance** - Saturday, June 14th, at 2pm
  - **First Holy Communion** - Sunday, June 22nd, time to be determined (after 12pm)
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
ST. MICHAEL'S, PAGET  
Fridays - 7:30pm (followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament)

### St. THERESA'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated at 7:30am.  
WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS and FRIDAYS at 12:10pm.
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
ST. THERESA'S CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON  
Fridays - 11:40am; 6:00pm  
Sundays - 4:00pm (Portuguese)

### St. ANTHONY'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated Tuesday-Friday at 8:30am
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
ST. ANTHONY'S, WARWICK  
Fridays - 7:00pm (English and Portuguese)

### St. PATRICK'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated at 8:00am
- The Rosary is recited every, WEDNESDAY at 10:00am
- A 6pm PORTUGUESE Mass followed by the Rosary each Wednesday at 7:00pm
- A mass in Tagalog takes place on, THE SECOND FRIDAY of the month at 7:00pm.
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
ST. PATRICK'S, SMITH'S  
Wednesdays - 6:00pm (followed by Holy Mass in Portuguese)  
Thursdays - 7:00pm (followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament)

### St. JOSEPH'S

- A Filipino mass is celebrated every, THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH at 11:00am
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
ST. JOSEPH'S, SANDYS  
Fridays - 7:00pm  
\*Leading the Stations - Carol DeSilva

### STELLA MARIS

- A Filipino mass is celebrated on the LAST Wednesday OF THE MONTH at 7:00pm
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
STELLA MARIS, ST. GEORGE'S  
Fridays - 7:30pm

### NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY

- **Catechesis for Young Adults & Youth 13+** Come and Listen on Mondays and Thursdays at 8:00pm St. Michaels Church Hall, *Free babysitting available.*

**ST. THERESA'S GIFT SHOP** is open, TUESDAYS and SATURDAYS  
10:00am-2:00pm

## EASTER FLOWER MEMORIALS

If you wish to contribute to the Easter flowers by donating flowers for your loved ones, envelopes can be found on the Altar rails. Please write the names of those to be remembered on the outside of the envelopes. Place your donation inside of envelope. Please drop your envelopes in the collection basket. Deadline for submission is April 13th, Palm Sunday. **Thank you in advance for your support in beautifying our Church.**

## SPECIAL COLLECTION

Please be advised that NEXT weekend the **29th/30th of March** there will be a Special Collection in all our parish churches as a "DIOCESAN LENTEN ALMSGIVING". It will be sent to support the construction of the Parish Centre and the Parish Play Ground near Dhaka, Bangladesh. More information is provided in the Bishop's Corner this week.

## DIOCESAN LENTEN RECONCILIATION

- **Wednesday, March 26th**, St. Patrick's Church from 4:00 to 6:00pm.
- **Thursday, March 27th**, St. Theresa's from 6.00 to 8:00pm.

*There will be two additional priests from Canada to minister the Sacrament together with our priests.*

**Moreover, there will be two additional opportunities for confession:**

- Wednesday of Holy Week, April 16th, both at St. Theresa's, in two sessions; 12:00pm to 1:00pm; and from 7:30pm to 8:30pm.

*There will be one additional priest from Canada to help with this Sacrament.*

## CELEBRATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES

Our Diocesan Jubilee 2025 Calendar celebration takes place THIS weekend **Saturday, 22nd of March at St. Joseph's Church in Sandys**. There will be a special Holy Mass at 11am with a reception following in the parish hall. For those who plan to attend the reception, **please RSVP to the Chancery by calling 232-4414.**

## ST. MICHAEL'S UPCOMING EVENTS

### MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>

Our next Coffee Social will be held on Sunday, May 4th following the 10:15 am Mass. Please mark your calendars now to attend the final Social prior to the summer break.

### JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup>

Our first Dinner Bingo in many years will be held on Saturday, June 14th following the 5pm Mass. We're keeping it simple and making it a Pizza Dinner. Who doesn't like Pizza?

Tickets will be \$20 each and include ONE (1) Bingo Card, additional cards will be \$5 each. Volunteers to help are encouraged, please email [Stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com](mailto:Stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com).

If you can donate a prize, THANK YOU in advance. Included will be a Kids Bingo, a Father's Bingo and much more as we will celebrate our Father's Day. MORE INFO TO COME. Tickets sales start the first week of May.

# Our Sunday Readings

EXODUS 3:1-8a, 13-15  
 PSALM 103:1-4, 6-8, 11  
 I CORINTHIANS 10:1-6, 10-12  
 LUKE 13:1-9

## On the Brink

### EXODUS 3:1-8a, 13-15

#### **Entering the word**

Imagine that you're Moses.

1. What time of day is it?
2. What do you hear, see, and smell?
3. How do you notice the bush?
4. What are you thinking as you approach the bush?
5. How do you react when you hear your name?
6. Why do you say, 'Here I am'?
7. What do you know about God?
8. Why are you afraid?
9. How do you feel about being the one to lead the Israelites?
10. Why do the Israelites need God's help?
11. How do you feel about going back to Egypt?
12. Are you satisfied with God's response to your request for a name?
13. What do you do next?

#### **Living the word**

14. What did you discover about God from this story?
15. What did you discover about yourself?
16. What encounters with holiness have you had?

### THE FIRST READING

#### **Back to Egypt**

This story unfolds when the Israelites are enslaved in Egypt. Moses fled after killing an Egyptian for beating an Israelite. Moses then married and wasn't planning a visit back to Egypt.

#### **LORD of history**

God promised Abraham and his descendants a land of their own. God will now fulfill this promise by taking the remarkable step of leading his people out of one land and into another. People of that era believed that gods were confined to a place. The LORD God is not. He will instead bind himself to a particular people.

#### **What the name means**

God gives his name as *YHWH*, often written as *LORD* so that people don't say this holy name aloud. Because the precise meaning of *YHWH* is unclear, the name is a warning not to use God's name in an attempt to control God.

The name is also God's promise to stand with Moses and the Israelites, who in this moment represent the weakest, most vulnerable members of society.

**LUKE 13:1-5**

1. Think of a time when people suddenly experienced something terrible.
  - a. Did people deserve what happened?
  - b. Could you ever find yourself in a similar situation?
  - c. How do you interpret such events?

**LUKE 13:6-9**

2. What could be some reasons the fig tree hasn't produced figs?
3. What all might the owner feel about the barren tree?
4. What could be prompting the gardener to give the tree more time?
5. What will the gardener do for the tree?
6. Who could the owner of the orchard represent?
7. What all could the fig tree represent?
8. Who could the gardener represent?
9. Where is there hope in the parable?
10. Where is there warning in the parable?
11. What all might the parable mean for you?

**THE GOSPEL READING**

**What happened?**

Galileans were Jews from Galilee, a region north of Judea. Here they seem to have traveled south to sacrifice animals in the Jerusalem temple. For reasons now unknown to us, Pontius Pilate, the Roman administrator of Judea, had them killed.

*Siloam* (sigh-LOH-um) was a section of ancient Jerusalem. In the Gospel of John we learn that the area was trenched to hold water (John 9:7). It seems that a section of a tower built into the wall that enclosed the city collapsed, killing the people inside it.

**What's your point, Jesus?**

Jesus makes it clear that neither of the two groups of people deserved to die any more (or less) than his listeners. Death simply caught them off-guard. Jesus draws from these terrible circumstances to make the broader point that people should change their lives now, while there's still time.

More specifically, people should accept that Jesus is bringing about God's kingdom and they should conform their lives to God's rule while there's still time. Those who deny that God is establishing his reign through Jesus will ultimately be excluded from salvation.

**Foreshadowings**

Luke may also intend for verses 1-5 to point to future events.

- Like his fellow Galileans, Jesus will be killed by Pilate. (And Jesus is certainly not a worse sinner than his listeners!)
- When the Jews rebel against Roman rule during 66-70 AD, blood is spilled and walls fall as the Romans destroy the Jerusalem temple and parts of the city.

**The fig tree**

The parable clarifies the meaning of verses 1-5. People are given time to repent, but that time will eventually end. This is the main point of the parable, but it's not the only meaning to draw from it. Parables invite reflection and discussion because they don't mean only one thing.

**PRAYER**

*adapted from prayers by John A. Hardon, SJ*

Dear Lord,  
 you have entrusted time to us  
 for the upbuilding of our soul.  
 Time is yours, not ours.  
 On the day of judgment you will reward us  
 according to the use we made of this gift.  
 Teach us to value time.  
 Show us the dangers of idleness.  
 Keep us from wasting the time that we have.  
 Make us diligent and hard-working,  
 generous and self-giving,  
 cheerful and patient.  
 Above all, may we be motivated  
 by our strong love for you and for others.  
 We ask this in the great and holy name of Jesus,  
 our Lord. Amen.