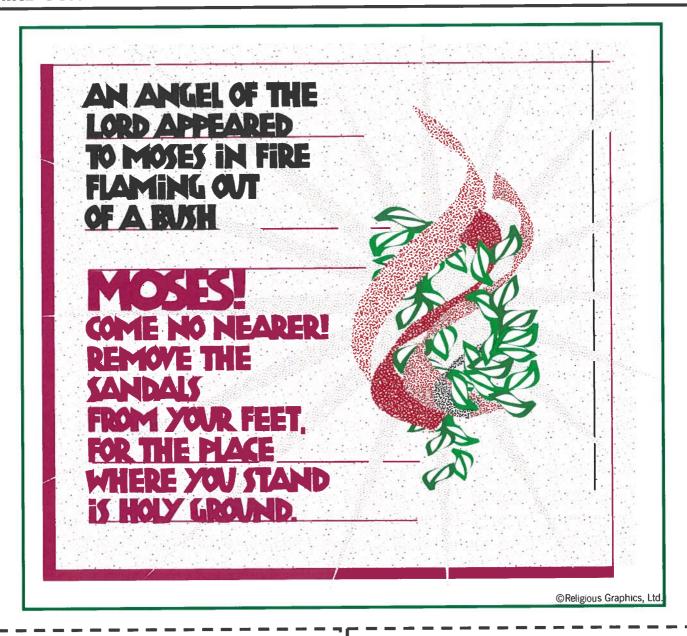
The Roman Catholic Parishes of St. Margaret Mary, Herscher St. James the Apostle, Irwin Sacred Heart, Goodrich

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 22-23, 2025



Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am

Sacred Heart Sun. 7:30 am

St. James Sun 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary

I Sacred Heart

St. James

Sat. 4:15 pm

Sun. 7:05-7:20 am

Sun 8:35-8:50 am

**Church Mailing Address:** 

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "Lent is about becoming, doing, and changing, whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now."

| Fourth Sunday of Lent               |   |   |   | March 29-30, 2025  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Liturgical<br>Schedule<br>Celebrant | St. Margaret Mary Saturday, March29 5:00 pm Fr. Ron Neitzke | Sacred Heart Sunday, March 30 7:30 am Fr. Ron Neitzke | St. James Sunday, March 30 9:00 am Fr. Ron Neitzke    | St. Margaret Mary<br>Sunday, March 30<br>10:30 am            |
|                                     |   | TT. NOTI NEILZRE                                      | Deacon Ron  | Fr. Ron Neitzke  |
| Ushers                              | Bob Schultz Dave Emling Roger Jensen Gery Wright            | Kyle Ferris<br>Daryl Ferris                           | Dallas Ferris Jerry Ogrentz Arlen Hansen Cathy Jensen | Erik Wheeler<br>Kim Smicker<br>Darren Lovell<br>Brent Fulton |
| Lector                              | Dave Emling   | Alicia Kirkpatrick                                    | Dave Ladehoff   | Diane Long   |
| Eucharistic<br>Minister             |   |   |   | Stacie Powers  |
| Servers                             |   |   |   | Caroline Fulton  |
| Greeters                            |   |   | Greeter—Rita Thiesen R. Leader—Donna Bernicky         | Julie Splear   |

### Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, March 24 (SMM)

8:00 am +Dorla Cooper (Renee Behrends)

Tuesday, March 25 (SH)

8:00 am +Joann Anderson (Terri/Jerry Weakley)

Wednesday, March 26 (SJ)

8:00 am (SJ) +Ruby Strachan

Friday, March 28 (SMM)

8:00 am +Mary Landeck Polvere (Dick/Sue Cotter)

Saturday, March 29 (SMM)

5:00 pm +Esther Regnier (Pat Gray)

+Dolores Clodi (Pam/Andrew Matern)

Sunday, March 30

7:30 am (SH) in honor Jackie Cross's 90th birthday (Rhonda

Berns)

9:00am (SJ) +Jeff Cooley (Maryanne Cooley

+Joan Smith (Cathy/Bruce Jensen)

10:30 am (SMM) All The Parish Family

### Question of the Week

Looking at this Jubilee Year of Hope from God's perspective, what can I do during the week ahead to justify God's hope in me?

### A Look Ahead

March 29/30—2nd Collection for Catholic Relief Services

Friday, April 4—First Friday at SJ

Thursday, April 10- Night in Italy—SMM

Thursday, April 24—SH Spring Luncheon

Saturday, April 26—First Communion SJ & SMM

Pastor - Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon - Ron Gagnon - rjgckg@aol.com

Home-815-933-4077

Parish Email - smm\_sja\_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page - www.triparishcatholics.org

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisaillon 426-2550

Bulletin - Debbie Jensen - 426-2550

debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education -

St. MM - Jill Fulton <u>ifulton.stmm@gmail.com</u>

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line-

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com St. James— Mary Offerman-602-670-8888 (call or text)

Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)

Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

### Collections Weekend of March 15-16, 2025

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,701

St. James—\$1,676

Sacred Heart—\$1,454

Thank you for your generosity!

### **LENTEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS SERVICES**

Wed. April 2nd 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SJ Friday, April 4th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SJ Wed. April 9th, 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SMM Friday, April 11th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

\*Please note, when Stations are held at SMM plan on being here 10-15 minutes early to avoid school traffic.



Please pray for the repose of the soul of

### +Mary Landeck Polvere

daughter of Jackie Landeck sister of Rob (Gayle)Landeck and Scott (Christie) Landeck

May Mary and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace. Our sincere sympathy to Jackie and all Mary's family and friends.



Please pray for the repose of the soul of

### +Virginia Gadbois

Sister of Birdie (Larry) Stevenson

May Virginia and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.

Our sincere sympathy to Birdie, family, and friends.

# Gospel Shorts Save Your Most Difficult Questions for Heaven

Why do bad things happen to good people? How do you figure these things?

The attempt by religious people to explain seemingly unjust tragedy and the difference between punishment and discipline has gone on since "day one."

Who has not heard an attempted explanation? How often has God not gotten a "bum rap" as a mean avenger?

If suffering and tragedy is not punishment for sin, where should we look for answers? To the discerning Holy Spirit who lives in us. He gives us wisdom and reveals to us the mind of God.

Perhaps it's best that we lean on God's love, and in the meanwhile, save our most difficult questions for Heaven?



### Adoration

First Friday adoration will be held on Friday, April 4 at St. James Church. Stations of the Cross at 3 pm

"Every consecrated host is made to burn Itself up with love in a human heart." -St. John Vianney

#### Parish News:

### St. Margaret Mary-

- ⇒ We will be collecting non perishable food for Herscher Council of Churches spring food baskets (Easter Baskets). Please place in the bin at the back of the church.
- ⇒ Ladies, please join us in the kitchen after mass on Sunday, April 6 to make our delicious spaghetti sauce for our A Night in Italy event on April 10.
- ⇒ There are ballots for the CCW Woman of the Year in the back if the church. Please write down the woman you feel is deserving of this honor and place it in the box.
- ⇒ Please watch for details on the Night In Italy 2025. It will be be held on Thursday, April 10th. Sign up sheet for volunteers and food donations in back of the church.

#### St. James

⇒ Our Lenten Project will be the Food Pantry of Kankakee. Items will be collected starting March 5.

### Sacred Heart-

- ⇒ The week of March 23rd, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in memory of Don St. Germaine, Sr.
- ⇒ Sacred Heart's CCW is preparing for their annual Spring Luncheon that will be at St. James Hall April 24th at 11am. We are now selling cash raffle tickets, accepting completed baskets for the basket raffle & door prizes. The poster is on the bulletin board at the entrance to the church to sign up for food donations. Your generosity is always appreciated.

### All Parishes—

- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.
- ⇒ Call the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2024.



Sheila Koerner's 90th birthday is approaching!

Please mail cards to: Arc at Dwight 300 E. Mazon Ave. Dwight, IL 60420

ATTN: Sheila Koerner

# From the Pastor's Pen

Obscure saint of the week: St. Ottone Frangipane (March 23) was born to the Italian nobility. He became a knight and fought in defense of the pope in Frascati, Italy. Captured on the field, he was imprisoned in a tower until he prayed for the intercession of Saint Leonard of Noblac and received miraculous assistance in escape. He made a pilgrimage to the Benedictine abbey to Saints Trinity of Cava dei Tirreni. He did not become a monk, but lived there, spending his days in prayer and work. From there he moved to the monastery of Montevergine and became a spiritual student of Saint William of Vercelli. Ottone moved to Ariano Irpino, Italy in 1117 where he devoted himself to care for the pilgrims that came through the city in route to the Holy Lands. He began living nearby as a hermit in 1120; Ottone even dug a grave next to his cell as a reminder that death was always near. His reputation for holiness, wisdom and miracles soon spread and drew many would-be students.





Other obscure saint of the week: St. Rafqa (March 23) was the daughter and only child of Mourad Saber Shabaq al-Rayes and Rafqa Gemayel. Her mother died when Rafka was six. She and her step-mother never got along. The girl worked as a maid from age 11 to 15, announcing at age 14 that she felt a call to religious life. Her father objected, but at 21 she became a nun in the Marian Order of the Immaculate Conception at Bikfaya, taking the religious name Anissa (= Agnes), and making her final vows in 1856.

In 1871, her Order merged with the order of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. The sisters were given the choice of joining the new combined order, joining other orders, or being released from their vows. Following dreams in which Saint Anthony the Great appeared to her, she joined the Lebanese *Order of Saint Anthony of the Maronites* (*Baladiya Order*) on July 12, 1871, taking the new religious name of *Rafqa* (= *Rebecca*).

On the feast of the Holy Rosary in 1885, Rafqa prayed that she might share Christ's sufferings. Her health began to deteriorate, and she was soon blind and crippled. She spent as much of her remaining 30 years

in prayer as she could but always insisted on working in the convent as well as she could with her disabilities, usually spinning wool and knitting. By 1907 she was completely blind and paralyzed. In 1981 a medical report based upon the evidence was presented in the Canonization process, specialists in ophthalmology, neurology and orthopedics diagnosed the most likely cause as tuberculosis with ocular localization and multiple bony excrescences. This causes unbearable pain, but Rafqa was thankful for her special form of communion.

Late in life, her close friend and supporter, Mother Superior Ursula Doumit, ordered her to dictate her autobiography, and Rafka complied. Near the time of her death, Rafqa asked that her sight be restored for a single hour so she could again see the face of Mother Ursula; the hour of sight was granted.

Beginning four days after her death, miraculous cures were recorded at Rafka's grave, the first being Mother Doumit whose throat was slowly closing and feared she would starve to death. Elizabeth En-Nakhel from Tourza, northern Lebanon, was cured from uterine cancer, through intercession to Rafqa, in 1938, the miracle which permitted her beatification.

### The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

About that time some people came up and told him about the Galileans Pilate had killed while they were at worship, mixing their blood with the blood of the sacrifices on the altar. esus responded, "Do you think those murdered Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans? Not at all. Unless you turn to God, you too will die. And those eighteen in erusalem the other day, the ones crushed and killed when the Tower of Siloam collapsed and fell on them, do you think they were worse citizens than all other Jerusalemites? Not at all. Unless you turn to God, you too will die."

Then he told them a story: "A man had an apple tree planted in his front yard. He came to t expecting to find apples, but there weren't any. He said to his gardener, 'What's going on I lere? For three years now I've come to this tree expecting apples and not one apple have I ound. Chop it down! Why waste good ground with it any longer?'

The gardener said, 'Let's give it another year. I'll dig around it and fertilize, and maybe it vill produce next year; if it doesn't, then chop it down' " (from Luke 13).

## Reflections No Risk, No Gain

Every relationship means risk, but we must take that risk, for while nearly all our sorrows come from our connection with other people, nearly all our joys have the same source.

### **Questions Catholics Ask**

#### What are the Last Rites?

Just as the church welcomes us at the start of life in the sacrament of Baptism, the church prepares us with sacramental rites and prayers to strengthen us for the final journey. These rites are known by various names: extreme unction, last rites, viaticum. Last rites aren't a discreet eighth sacrament, but incorporate aspects of three familiar ones: Reconciliation, Anointing, and Holy Communion (called in this hour viaticum, Latin for "on the way with you"). Included in these rites are prayers commending the dying person to the protection of God.

Death isn't typically an event we can schedule on a calendar and organize liturgically, like other sacramental occasions. The moment of death is far from uniform, and may not be predicted much in advance. This makes what happens in the Last Rites highly flexible to the nearness of death as well as the coherence and ability of the dying person



Death isn't typically an event we can schedule on a calendar

When the person receiving the sacraments is capable, the Last Rites are celebrat- and organize liturgically, like other sacramental occasions. ed in their fullness. The priest is the typical minister of these rites, but it's appro-

priate that family is present whether in a home or hospital setting. The private sacrament of Reconciliation is followed by the communal Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament may take place even if there's been a previous anointing earlier in the illness. Silence, the laying on of hands, prayer, and the blessing with oils are signs that remind us of the healing authority of Christ. (The term extreme unction was formerly used to express the urgency of this final "unction," or anointing.)

The Anointing of the Sick imparts many graces. Gifts of the Spirit—peace, strength, and courage—are made available to the dying. We're united with the passion of Christ in our suffering. The faith of the dying person strengthens the church as it "contributes to the good of the People of God" in this powerful witness. (Lumen Gentium 11:2) Lastly, the anointing prepares the traveler for the final journey into life ever lasting.

### **Catholic Snacks, Get Fed**

What is the Celtic Cross? How did a pagan symbol help spread the Catholic Faith?

If you have enjoyed roaming the rugged Irish countryside, you may have stumbled upon a Celtic cross. These crosses, ranging from small, simple grave markers to 20-foot-high landmarks, some intricately carved by artisans, others roughly hewn by commoners' hands are spread throughout Ireland.

But what are they, what do they represent, and how did they become such cultural symbols, both in Ireland and worldwide?

In Ireland, it is a popular legend that the Christian cross was introduced to the island by St. Patrick. Prior to that, there was a variety of Celtic religious imagery on the Island. The Celtic cross is the beautiful combination of these images, Christian and Celtic, into a unity tha relays profound realities of our Faith.

The distinctive Celtic cross is usually mounted on a circle, a Celtic representation of the sun and the circle of life, and often features Celtic knotwork or other symbolism.

Tradition says that St. Patrick, desiring to evangelize the Celtic people, was inspired to use religious concepts they were familiar with, so as to explain the realities of the Faith in an accessible manner. In this tradition, it is said that St. Patrick combined the cross of Christiani ty with this circle to give the pagans an idea of the life-giving Cross of Christ.

By linking the Celtic circle, which evoked eternity and the life-giving properties of the sun, with the Christian cross, the Celtic cross helped the people of Ireland conceptualize the stunning reality of Christ's life-giving gift of eternity, given to us through the Cross.

Other interpretations claim that placing the cross on top of the circle represents Christ's supremacy over the pagan sun. The cross symbolizes the God-man's death and Resurrection and therefore His power over all of creation.

Utilizing these striking symbols, already deeply rooted in Celtic culture, Christianity was able to spread rapidly throughout Ireland. Although there was not widespread literacy in Ireland at the time, these symbols told a powerful story to the Celtic people without the use of a single word. Through these symbols, stories of the Bible and the tenets of Christianity were communicated, making the Celtic cross a silent yet eloquent preacher of the Faith.

In contemporary times, the Celtic cross is far more than a relic of the past. It stands as a proud emblem of Irish heritage and the Catholic Faith. Whether in the form of jewelry, decor, or gravestones, the Celtic cross remains a popular symbol, a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Faith through the ages.

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You are cordially invited to the Diocese of Joliet

12:30 p.m.

athedral of St. Raymond 604 N. Raynor Ave. Jollet, Illinois

The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Ronald Hicks, refreshments and fellow-hip to follow. Those with disABILITIES, and their caregivers, will eceive a special blessing

### lan Today for Peace of Mind Tomorrow

's difficult to think about, but pre-planning your Catholic cemetery arrangenents today protects your family from the heartbreak and financial worry of aving to make these decisions tomorrow. Look for special savings in your nailbox soon and visit diojoliet.org/cemeteries for more details. We're here to elp!

lishop McNamara Assembly 202-Vocational Dinner and Auction

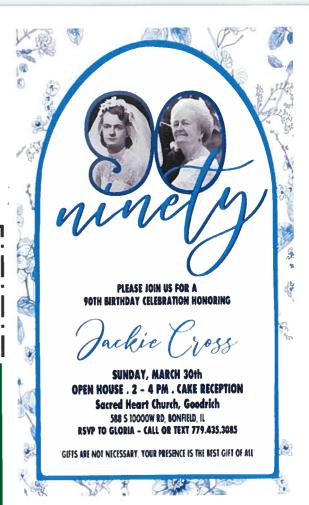
aturday, March 29, 2025 at Knights of Columbus Hall

locktails-6:00 pm / Dinner-7:00 pm

Please plan on attending this event that supports our future priests—this event is open to all.

Please complete the Dinner Reservation form found in the entrance to the church and return t to Deacon Pat Skelly prior to March 21, 2025.

Please see Deacon Ron for additional reservation forms.



Note: change of location to St. James Parish Hall.

## SAVE THE DATE:

MONDAY, MARCH 31 THRU WEDNES-DAY, APRIL 2" SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH BRADLEY, IL.

Our mission at our Parish Church (designated as a Pilgrimage Church for the Diocese by Bishop Hicks) is available to anyone interested with an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation available each

evening (of the Mission) beginning at 6pm until just prior to our 7pm presentation which is being given by Father Adrian mission Burke OSB. His parish mission topic will be We (the church) as: "Pilgrims of Hope".



St. Patrick's and the Knights of Columbus will again be having their Annual Lenten Fish Frys at St. Patrick's Hall in Dwight.

March 28, April 4, and April 11 5pm-7pm

The price includes your choice of baked cod, fried pollock and breaded shrimp. Also available-grilled cheese sandwich and mac & cheese (new). Your choice of sides is baked potato, French fries, Cole slaw, apple sauce and rolls, beverage and a dessert, while they last.

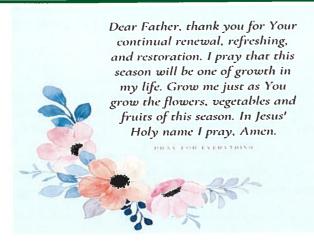
Take out orders are available for the You can call ahead at 815-584-3110



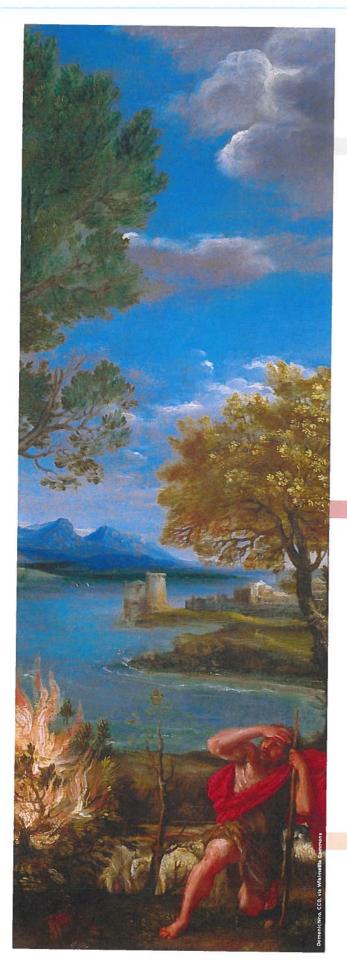
No price increase from last year! Adults / High School - \$13.00 Grade School - \$6.00

IAM





This is my name for all generations ©Religious Graphics, Ltd.



March 23, 2025

# Third Sunday of Lent

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15 | 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12 | Lk 13:1-9

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE Meaningful human relationships rarely last if only one party makes an effort to maintain a connection. The same is true in our relationship with God. In the scene recorded in today's first reading - arguably one of human history's "Top Ten" most important events - God takes the initiative, but the encounter is two-sided. God causes the bush to burn and Moses approaches; God calls Moses and he responds, "Here I am!"; finally, Moses asks God his name and God reveals himself as "I am who am." Moses' cooperation with God throughout is essential for them to arrive at this monumental revelation which would allow Moses (and, by extension. all of the Israelites) to call upon God by name. Despite our many technological achievements, a free, generous, loving response to God's initiative is still the only "fruit" we can bear for him that he cannot procure himself. This is the fruit which the fig tree in Jesus' Gospel parable is meant to produce. If we truly desire and seek this relationship, God will reveal himself to us so that, no matter our stage or state of life, we can bear this fruit even now.

### GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT In his encounter with God, Moses exhibits an exemplary combination of boldness and humility which teaches us how we should approach our relationship with God. This is our "roadmap" which will help us fertilize the "ground" of our hearts. Consider Moses' bold, inquisitive spirit: "I must go over to look at this remarkable sight," and his prompt response to God's call: "Here I am!" Consider the audacity Moses must have had to ask God for his name. At the same time, however, consider his humility in removing the sandals from his feet and hiding his face before the majesty of God. The God who revealed himself to Moses is the same God who invites us into relationship with him. We can and should have Moses' boldness to ask God to teach us about himself. But we should also approach God with a spirit of reverence and awe. Our humility will be the fertile soil that God can use to make us his intimate friends and his representatives before others.

#### LISTEN

Sometimes we have habits or attitudes that prevent us from hearing God's voice. Like Moses removing his sandals, choose something you can forgo this week (for example, social media or music in the car) so that you can hear and respond to the Lord. Make sure you dedicate your extra quiet time to talking to God.

### SPIRITUALITY

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matt 4:17

Repent, says the Lord; the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

### Gospel Luke 13:1-9; L30C

Some people told Jesus about the Galileans

whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.

Jesus 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."

Year A readings may be used, see Appendix A, pp. 273–274

#### Reflecting on the Gospel

A well-known evangelical preacher pointed a finger at the people of Haiti, declaring that their own sinfulness had brought down upon them the wrath of God in the form of an earthquake. It's such a simple explanation: if something bad happens, then the victims must have done something to deserve it. That's what Jesus figures people are thinking when they report to him about the people whom Pilate murdered and the people who were killed when a tower fell on them.



There may, indeed, be sinful causes behind these events, but not on the part of the victim. Pilate, who carries out violent execution of innocent people, embodies a sinwracked system. Deaths caused by shoddy workmanship or construction shortcuts, when profit is prized over human safety, are the result of sinful practices, but not those of the ones who fall victim. In the gospel, Jesus does not answer the more complex question of why bad things happen to good people, but he does clearly dissociate untimely death from sin and guilt. What he emphasizes in his response is the need to always be prepared-the end could come quite unexpectedly. Are you ready?

The gospel also underscores God's patience in waiting for us to repent and "bear fruit." In Luke's gospel, repentance does not come about by human efforts at reforming our lives. Rather, the process of transformation begins with God's gracious initiative. Our Lenten practices help to sharpen our ability to be transformed and to respond in such ways that can set us ablaze with divine love, like the bush that caused Moses to turn aside and look.

The examples of people dying in unexpectedly tragic ways are not meant to scare us into repentance. They are a sobering reminder, however, that our time to respond to the divine invitation is limited. We would not want to miss the opportunity to enter more deeply into the heart of "the One who causes to be what comes into existence," as renowned biblical scholar William F. Albright translated the mysterious divine name in Exodus 3:14, which we hear in today's first reading as "I AM."

There is no adequate explanation for sudden, tragic death. Nor is there any adequate way to speak of the One Who Is and Who Causes All to Be. Yet we long for precise answers to our most difficult questions. Moses insists that he needs to be able to tell the Israelites who it is that sent him. But God rightly resists any limitations of human categorization. In ancient cultures it was thought that knowing another's name gave you power over that one. Not only can we not have power over God, but any words or images we use are completely inadequate to put into speech who and what God is. As we journey in Lent, it is a good time to let go of any overconfidence, as Paul admonishes the Corinthians, allowing ourselves to be enveloped in mystery, to be fashioned anew by the One Who Causes All to Be.