March 20, 2022 | Third Sunday of Lent

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

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Several years ago, my family gave me a blueberry bush for Mother's Day. It has yet to produce a single berry. However, I can't bring myself to remove it, and today's Gospel encourages me to be patient (a Google search reveals that it can take several years for a blueberry bush to produce a harvest!). The parable of the fig tree shows us how patient God is with us. Like the fig tree, we may not bear fruit or feel as if we're growing spiritually, even as we enter the second half of Lent. Yet Jesus teaches us that if we nurture our faith through prayer and repentance of our sins, we can always grow and blossom. Like the gardener, we need to be patient with ourselves as God is patient with us.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

It strikes me that in the parable of the fig tree, the gardener offered to cultivate *the ground around it*. Just as a tree needs light and water and a little individual TLC, it needs good soil. I think for us Catholics, that can be where our parish community and the broader Church come in. Through small actions such as greeting newcomers at Sunday Mass or volunteering in a parish ministry, we can become the fertile soil that nourishes not only our own faith, but that of the entire community. The 2021-23 Synod on Synodality invites us to share our faith and also to listen without judgment to the experiences of others. In doing so, we as a Church can grow stronger. As Pope Francis said in his opening prayer, "May this Synod be a true season of the Spirit! For we need the Spirit, the ever new breath of God, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is moribund, loosens shackles and spreads joy."

STUDY

Learn about the Synod on Synodality: www.usccb.org/synod. Check your parish bulletin to see how you can get involved.