



Sunday 20th March 2022

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priests:** Fr. Tao Pham & Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Jacinta Bright & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: By Appointment only please call the Parish Office

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

Mass at Home: St Patrick's Cathedral: On Channel 31, 44 on Digital TV, for Sunday Mass at 11.00am

Mass for You at Home - Diocese of Wollongong: Sundays on Channel 10 at 6am, Foxtel Channel 173 at 10am, and online at
www.massforyou.com.au

Combined Parishes Communal Reconciliation Service

St Thomas Parish Wednesday 6th April, 7.30pm-9.30pm



The essential task of a prophet in the biblical tradition is to summon people to conversion.

23rd Sunday of Lent

Fr Brendan Byrne SJ

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/article/homily-notes--third-sunday-of-lent-year-c>

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.

Diamond Valley Deanery

www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

LENTEN THEME 2022 - COURAGE TO HOPE

Lent is the liturgical season for prayer, reflection and contrition for any wrongdoing we have made in our lives as we prepare for the joyous season of Easter. The theme for this year is particularly timely as the world has suffered greatly over the past two years through the pandemic, and the temptation to lose hope and fall into despair may be strong. With political turmoil at home and abroad, a climate that needs nurturing and our communities that have suffered fear, uncertainty, restrictions and profound loss and grief, we need the courage to hope more than ever and we look to our God to sustain us.

This is the time to find our courage, to turn in hope to our loving God. It is through challenges and hard times that we find the strength within and draw on our faith to persevere and look with confidence to the future. Without courage we dare not hope. Without faith and hope, life is empty. During this Lenten time of reflection and prayer, let us remember that our God is always present, to hold us, to love us, to lead us forward to the Kingdom.

“May the God of hope fill you with all the joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” **Romans 15: 13**

WEEK 3 GOSPEL REFLECTION

Today is the third weekend of Lent and we pause to reflect.

In the Gospel today Jesus reminds us of the randomness of tragedies in life and therefore of the importance of living a good life according to his teachings. Jesus warned his followers not to wait to repent any wrongdoing because life may end without warning. Redemption and salvation await those who recognise the need to change their ways of living as they grow in faith. Like the fig tree Jesus wants us to ‘bear fruit’ in our lives. Take courage to hope in his patience and mercy.

Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off. Proverbs 24:14

UPDATE FROM THE PARTNERED PARISHES PLENARY FACILITATORS’ GROUP

Currently, as an action that we can take up locally, the Group is exploring ways of acknowledging the pain caused by sexual abuse perpetrated by Church personnel. There are three projects underway. One is a plaque to be placed in a prominent place outside each church, acknowledging the pain caused and expressing sorrow. Another is a ritual of lament, or something similar, for each of our parishes and the third is a letter to the Archbishop with a request for a sculpture and plaque to be installed in the Cathedral garden, facing Albert Street.

When our three parishes gathered for the Plenary Listening and Discussion - and Discernment sessions, one major focus for most groups that emerged, was the sexual abuse of children perpetrated by Church personnel. You may recall that we have two avenues of response proposed to us by the Plenary Council. One was to consider what God was asking the Church of Australia at a national level and the other was to consider what God is asking of us locally. We have been working together to respond as best we can as Partnered Parishes, addressing those local issues. So far relationships have been strengthened or developed with our local Catholic secondary schools, we have written to the Plenary Council in response to their document outlining the fruits of their discussions last year, we have established a Faith Circles Group, we have developed a PowerPoint welcoming all to our churches, from St Mary’s - a response to the desire expressed for the parish to have a focus on mental ill health and we are liaising with our Liturgy Teams with your feedback. We hope that our parishes continue to be a sign of the Spirit active in the world, as we find ways to respond to the desires that you, our parishioners, have voiced during those Plenary times. **Any feedback from you is welcome.**

PROJECT COMPASSION 2022 Second Sunday of Lent

Janice 44, is a proud Wagilak woman, a traditional dancer, living in a remote community in the Northern Territory. As elders grow older and pass away, she knows she must share her knowledge with the younger generation. However, the community faces multiple challenges, including a lack of jobs, limited educational opportunities, and socio-economic which can lead to young people becoming disconnected from culture. With your help, Caritas Australia supports Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation, which operates a centre for traditional and contemporary Aboriginal arts and culture, providing employment and generating income for local communities.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2022 and help provide employment and training for First Australians, allowing them to remain on country and keep their culture alive.

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow For All Future Generations.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your Parish, by visiting lent.caritas.org.au, or by calling 1800 024 413



ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

FLOOD APPEAL-SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL: The floods in Queensland and New South Wales are having a devastating effect on the people living in these regions of Australia. For those wishing to support the long-term recovery work to be undertaken by St Vincent de Paul in Queensland and New South Wales, financial donations can be made either directly to either state through: https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/Flood_appeal/



CARITAS AUSTRALIA– UKRAINE EMERGENCY APPEAL: The people of Ukraine are living through a crisis that will impact the country for years to come. Caritas Australia has launched an appeal to support Caritas Ukraine and other partners in the region. The appeal will support the provision of clean water, hygiene and food kits to vulnerable families, as well as safe collection centres for families on the move, emergency accommodation and support for distressed children and families. <https://www.childfund.org.au/help-children-in-ukraine/> or contact 1800 024 413.



MEDITATION AT ST PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH: Are offering Meditation on Saturday's from 10.00am-10.30am, at 1 Monckton Road, Bundoora. No cost involved. For further details contact: Ranjit 0403 654549.

ST GABRIEL'S PARISH, RESERVOIR: invites you to a spiritual afternoon with St Joseph, 2-5pm Sunday 20 March 2022. The afternoon will include two talks given by Anna Krohn and Sr Mary Sarah OP on different aspects of the life of St Joseph, Litany of St Joseph, Eucharistic Adoration, Benediction, and afternoon tea. All welcome! Entry by donation. For more information and to register go to : www.sapientiproject.com or call St Gabriel's Parish Office on 9460 6036.

WALK WITH MARY: It has been 3 years since we have been able to hold the Walk With Mary. Join the Combined Societies of Mary and Bishop Tony Ireland at St Patrick's Cathedral for a special Mass, street procession and entrustment to Our Lady. How many times has God shown His power when His Mother has been honoured? Now is our time to be part of history, to be part of the great and final victory of God through Our Lady. Let us gather in a show of great love, devotion and confidence in Our Blessed Mother, again asking Her powerful intercession.

There will be prayers, Mass, street procession and finally a solemn entrustment of all present to Our Lady. It has been three years since we have been able to hold the Walk With Mary. How the people and the Church has suffered during this time. Let us all gather together and pray that Our Lady will once again bring Her children and the Church to a marvelous renewal and victory. Sunday 20th March, 2.00pm-3.30pm at St Patrick's Cathedral.

God works his greatest victories through Our Lady! For more information contact www.thecombinedsocietiesofmary.com or Joy Hunt 9509 2207.

HEART OF LIFE CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL & PASTORAL FORMATION : 'Windows onto God', Saturday 26/3/22, 10am-3pm (in-person event). In this reflection day, we invite you to explore the windows of incarnation, darkness, abundance and self-acceptance. Incarnation, seen in the broad sense of God being in the world, takes in the joy of being alive. With this joy, there is the experience of darkness, which is also part of our human reality. Abundance picks up the theme of incarnation. It reminds us that God is lavish with her/his gifts and wants us to enjoy them. Self-acceptance is linked to these themes since it means accepting both the darkness and the light in ourselves. This day will be interactive and will allow time for reflection and sharing. Cost: \$60 (BYO lunch) Book and pay via website www.heartoflife.melbourne or email info@heartoflife.melbourne tel 9890 1101.

INFORMATION SESSION - PERMANENT DIACONATE: The Permanent Diaconate is open to single and married men who want to serve God and the Church as ordained ministers. COME & SEE! An Information Session about the Permanent Diaconate will be held on Saturday 2 April 2022, 10:00 -11.45 am at the Catholic Theological College (CTC), East Melbourne. For more information:

A new Vocations website is under development, however the links below (copy, then paste) are working.

Watch: Melbourne's Deacons <https://youtu.be/q2RhNDbtT50> Watch: Pope Francis' 2020 Prayer Intention for Deacons <https://youtu.be/NuG99HD1LaY> Read More: [Brochure] <https://www.cam1.org.au/permanent-diaconate>

Contact: Office of the Permanent Diaconate (Phone) 03 9412 3357 (Email) diaconate@cam.org.au

A MESSAGE FROM AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED AUSTRALIA: Aid to the Church in Need has launched a national emergency appeal for Ukraine. ACN is committed to strengthening and supporting the Catholic Church in Ukraine, as we have done for the past 70 years. The immediate emergency help will support the work of the Church in Ukraine by assisting priests, brothers, and religious sisters to continue their pastoral and outreach programs.

We will continue to stand by our brothers and sisters in faith as they undergo trying times and seek to bring peace to a country that is surrounded by turmoil and unrest. Can you provide aid to the Catholic people in Ukraine? They need your help! Visit www.aidtochurch.org/ukraine

ALPHA COURSE AT ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH: Alpha is an exciting refresher Course in the Christian faith.

The Alpha Course at St Francis will start on Thursday, 5th May, 7.00 pm - 9.30 pm, at St Francis Hall, 290 Childs Road Mill Park.

Alpha runs for ten Thursdays. Explore questions of life and faith and make new friendships at Alpha!

Everyone is invited! Come and bring a friend! Enquiries – Contact Ruth: 9407 6700. Email: Ruth.Lees@cam.org.au

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



Baptisms: We pray for Zoe, Noah and Leah who we welcomed into the Sacred Heart community in March.

Catechetics: This Sunday we welcome the following children from our Catechetics class as they commit to the sacramental program. Taya, Tomas and Marcus, Bianca and Chloe, Reece and Darcy, Heavyne, Makailey, Lola, Zoe, Keeley, Archie, William & Marcus

Parish Pastoral Council: Meeting 10th March. Agenda included: further discussion of possible sharing of St Peter's church with the Hurstbridge Baptist Community. Provision of relevant brochures, information & links for

parishioners. Successful Partnered Parishes PPC Formation Day held at St Peter's, meeting PPC members from St Thomas and St Mary's, discussing and planning our future together. Representatives from many parish groups attended the recent Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction Evening. Sacred Heart School to include parishioners on 60th Anniversary Committee. Maintenance update on Parish Hall roof repairs and occupation of Mercy Cottage. Discussion on "How can we be more missionary in our Parish?" Parish to host a Prep Parent Evening. World Day of Prayer very successful, Sacred Heart to host next year. Combined Parish Mission Teams will meet on Thursday 24th March.

Sacred Heart Rosters: We aim to restart our Rosters by the end of April. Please contact the Parish Office or let Pat know if you are available to join the Setting up, Counting or Church Cleaning Roster. Thank you.

Funeral Ministry: Please consider joining our Funeral Ministry Team Roster. Participants assist our Priests when meeting with families to organize funerals. They also help to set up the church, support and welcome the family on the day of the Funeral. Talk to Frank Ledda or contact the Office for more information.

Lunch invitation: Please contact Margaret Jose if you would like to join the *Senior Moments* for Lunch at Bridges Restaurant Hurstbridge 12pm on Wednesday 6th April.

Wednesday 20th April 12pm Lunch and games in the Parish Centre.

Diamond Creek St Vincent de Paul: Thank you to Peter Kelly for accepting the role of Treasurer.

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Mario Molinaro, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Tony Ledda, Margaret Holland, Bridie Burke, Mary Rafferty, Thomas Keenan

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Les Ginnivan, Madeleine Blake, Laurence Dunn, Patrick Coyle

Roster for Weekend 27th March & 2nd April

Sunday Sacred Heart 9.00am: Reader: F. Ledda **Eucharistic Minister:** C. Ledda, M. Cusack

Saturday 2nd April St Peter's 7.15pm: Reader: R. Edmonds **Eucharistic Ministers:** H. Edmonds, E. Gittens

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS

Parental Supervision: With the return of families at our Masses and as our toilets are out of view, parental supervision of your children is required while using the facilities.

CORPUS CHRISTI SEMINARIANS: We welcome two Corpus Christi seminarians who will be at the 10.30 Mass 2 or 3 times a month as part of their formation. Please make them welcome and you might use the opportunity to invite them for Sunday lunch in your homes. Their names are Greg Lewis and Dominic Lawes.

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Peg Wilcox, Dawn Ellis, Miran Kasalo,

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

John McGauran, Kath Glennen, Sydney Raymond, Michael Pase, Carl Troiano, Rollo Jackson, Elizabeth Salm, Antonio Gallo, Kathleen Sheehan, Lina Bertuna, Bernadette O'Brien, Bonnie Dickson, Ian Stephens, Annette Hyland, Kellie Stuckey, Jean McMahon

Rosters for Weekend 26th & 27th March

Saturday 6.00pm:

Reader: E. Sacchetta

Commentator: P. Carty

Eucharistic Ministers: T. Holland, M. McKenzie, K. Salm

Set Up: J. De Carlo

Sunday 10.30am:

Reader: M. Kenny

Commentator: J. Kerr

Eucharistic Ministers: A. Letzia, R. Piccolo, E. Sutherland

Set Up: C. & B. Riordan

Counters M. Loy, C. Bell, B. Klepp, P. Klepp

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"



PLEASE NOTE NEW PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Francesca and Sharon will provide for our **secretarial needs on Tuesdays 9am-5pm and Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm** and Jacinta's **days will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-5pm.**

Please continue to send any bulletin contributions to Francesca and Sharon at greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin.

FIRST EUCHARIST CANDIDATES We welcome Eucharist candidates and their families at our Masses this weekend as they receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Our prayers and support are with you all. May they always remember that they can turn to Jesus who is their true friend, and who will always lovingly care for them

St Mary's Prayer Shawl Group Meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enq: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

Communion to the Sick at St. Mary's— If you or someone you know cannot attend Mass due to illness and would like to receive Communion, please contact the parish office on 9435 1543.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS will take place on Fridays in St. Mary's Church at 7.30pm.

HELP WITH TRANSPORT TO MASS: A parishioner who is unable to get to Mass would greatly appreciate if anyone would be available to take them to 10.00am Mass on Sundays. If you are able to help could you please contact the Parish Office 94351543.

ST MARY'S FUNERAL MINISTRY TEAM is urgently seeking new members capable of preparing and/or running the audio-visual presentations at funerals. Please contact the parish office for more information 9435 1543 or greensborough@cam.org.au

Thank you

ATTENTION CREDIT CARD CONTRIBUTORS: Please contact the parish office on 9435 1543 or email to greensborough@cam.org.au if there has been a change to your credit card details, e.g. expiry date, new card etc, so that your contribution can be processed correctly. Thank you for your assistance.

BEREAVEMENT BOOK: Parishioners are invited to print the names of the deceased family members, under the date of the anniversary of death, in the diary which is located on the table in the Gathering Space. These names will be transferred and recorded in our Remembrance Book and remembered in prayer at each mass celebrated during the month of November.

Any parishioner wishing to have a Mass offered on a specific date is requested to complete a Mass Intention Envelope and hand it to Fr Steven or the Parish Office in advance.

Please indicate the date and mass time you wish the mass to be celebrated and include your telephone number.



PLEASE PRAY FOR

Special Prayers are asked for Bridget and Glenn's baby during the pregnancy.

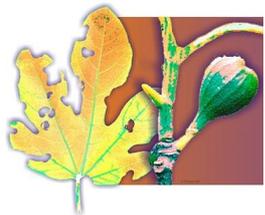
March Baptisms: Eleanor Borg, Stevee Pearse, Molly Milne, Leela Forrest, Vance McVeigh

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners & friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Peter Mejak, Pat Garrard, Michael Mc Aleer, Helen Sinnott,

Recently Deceased: Pat Boyd

We Pray for those whose Anniversaries occur this week, may they enter joyfully into God's Kingdom: Kathleen Luttick, Joy Reid, Gilchrist Lundberg, Louie Agpawa, Dan Leahy, George Frantz Teycheney, Rose Papageorgiou, John Palmer, Bruce Kennedy, Hilda Doherty, Lucy Brennan, Delsic Arenha, Rudi Jahne, Tom & Ada Larkin, Roy Arnold/Jones, Ken Schell, Georgeen Regan, Joseph Carbone, Mrs L D'Souza, Elaine Gleeson, Rebecah Dado, Bonnie Dickson, John Harrington, Ric Millar, May Early, Stan Desmond, Sr. Angela Merici, Kay McRibbin, Fr Walter Silvester, Marcial Moral, Arsen Emirzian, Sharn Davern, Rose Hughes, Greg Maher, Annie Heath, Mary Edwards, Kath Case, Lucy D'Souza, Tristan Cosgriff, Marie Azevedo, Theodore Grote, Henry Wessels, Arthur Maxwell, Gerard L'Huillier, Michael O'Connor, Kathleen, Fitzpatrick, Josephine Phelan, Daniel McCabe, John Fitzgerald, Angelita Moral, Colin Wade, Bill Reynolds, Louie Agpawa, Jenny Kenny, Colm Kiernan, Raymond Lee, Allan Doupé



Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close

There is a tough but fair Lenten message in the parable of the fig tree: before it is chopped down and reduced to dead wood, the tree is given one more chance to be fruitful. There is a 'be warned' side to this story and a 'take heart' aspect as well. Yes, be warned because every one of us has to be fruitful in our own way, and yes, take heart because God is on our side. What is the dead wood in your life and what needs nourishment?

Third Sunday of Lent, Year C

20 March 2022

First Reading Ex 3:1-8, 13-15

This is what you must say to the children of Israel: I Am has sent me to you.

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. 'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said, 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' Now the Lord saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am' he answered. 'Come no nearer' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father,' he said 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.

And the Lord said, 'I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow.'

Then Moses said to God, 'I am to go, then, to the sons of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." But if they ask me what his name is, what am I to tell them?' And God said to Moses, 'I Am who I Am. This' he added 'is what you must say to the sons of Israel: "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is my name for all time; by this name I shall be invoked for all generations to come.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 102:1-4. 6-8. 11. R. v.8

(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. *(R.)*
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. *(R.)*
3. The Lord does deeds of justice, gives judgement for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses and his deeds to Israel's sons. *(R.)*
4. The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him. *(R.)*

Second Reading 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12

All this that happened to the people of Moses in the desert was written for our benefit.

I want to remind you how our fathers were all guided by a cloud above them and how they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in this cloud and in this sea; all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, since they all drank from the spiritual rock that followed them as they went, and that rock was Christ. In spite of this, most of them failed to please God and their corpses littered the desert.

These things all happened as warnings for us, not to have the wicked lusts for forbidden things that they had. You must never complain: some of them did, and they were killed by the Destroyer.

All this happened to them as a warning and it was written down to be a lesson for us who are living at the end of the age. The man who thinks he is safe must be careful that he does not fall.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 4:17

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Repent, says the Lord;

the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel Lk 13:1-9

Unless you repent you will all perish as they did.

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."'

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Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

There was a terrible disaster when a building fell down killing eighteen people. Some said, 'Oh, those killed must have been sinners, they or their parents.' Jesus repudiates that notion: 'No, it wasn't for anything they did.' It was clear to Jesus that they were the victims of poor construction and conditions at Siloam. Look at the builder.

Responsibility needs to be brought home to those who would otherwise hide behind a religious ideology, or the sheer self-interest of evading blame for a situation.

To identify those really responsible may well require major changes to the way society is organised.

Does it all seem too difficult? Jesus helps us with a metaphor:

You are like a fig tree which may not be bearing much fruit just now, but, I am a terrific gardener:

I will water you, dig around you, make sure you are well nourished

so that you will bear the fruits I desire.

Our Lord does that by:

watering us with the waters of baptism;

pruning us, especially during Lent;

nourishing us with the bread of life in Holy Communion.

We might pause at various times during Lent to allow Our Lord to garden us so that he may create a heavenly botanical garden, a new Eden, of the whole of humanity.