

PARABLES OF MERCY

The Barren Fig Tree

Luke 13 : 6 - 9
Leave one more year



Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has initiated this Year of Mercy as an opportunity for pilgrimage, reflection and commitment to action that will enable Mercy to be made concrete and practical in our own local communities.

Thank you for your willingness to enter into this time of prayer and reflection. May it be an experience of Mercy which will enable you to further respond with Mercy and compassion in your local community.

Lectio / Visio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin term meaning “Reading with God”.

Visio Davina is a Latin term meaning “seeing or looking with God”.

We hope that the parable windows will be a Lectio / Visio Divina for the community of pilgrims in the Year of Mercy so that we may also “See with God”.

The practice of sacred reading has been practiced in the church for centuries, and has its origin in the monastic life as a pathway for prayer with scripture. It leads us gently into a deeper relationship with Christ as we open ourselves to him. It is the ultimate DIY spiritual project.

Brendan Lodge Photography

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There are four steps in the traditional practice of Lectio Divina. But they do not need to be followed in this particular sequence.

1. Lectio Visio (reading-looking)

Look at the window slowly,
read the scripture ...become aware of a particular
word - phrase - colour - object or character.
(There is a page for your jottings inside the back cover.)

2. Meditatio (reflection)

Let the significant word / object / colour / character fill your
mind without straining to analyse them.
You are in God's presence,
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

3. Oratio (prayer)

Allow your heart to speak to God,
in words or emotions inspired by the parable
or the thoughts that have come to you while reflecting.

4. Contemplatio (rest)

Let go of ideas and words and allow yourself to rest in the
presence of God in simple wordless contemplation.

(Adapted from the
Lectio Divina pamphlet - NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2011)



LUKE 13/6

The Barren Fig Tree Luke 13:6-9

Jesus told them this parable.

“A land owner had a fig tree.

He said to the gardener

‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this tree and haven’t found any.

Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

‘Sir,’ the gardener replied,

‘leave it alone for one more year,

and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.

If it bears fruit next year, fine!

If not, then cut it down.’”

1. Look and be open to the parable window.

Look for a particular colour, character, object, concept or word that may seem significant.

2. Let that which is significant fill your mind without analysing, you are in God’s presence -

let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

3. Allow your heart to speak to God as you are inspired by the parable.

4. How am I called to respond?

Allow yourself to rest in the presence of God.

At each of the parable windows, there are three basic questions:

- What do I notice
as I look at the parable window?
Why does it move me?
- Where do I see love, mercy, faithfulness,
compassion or forgiveness in this parable?
- How am I called to respond in my life?

A space for journaling:

(Please jot down your thoughts and insights for further reflection)

You may like to enter the parable window through your imagination, as a character or an object ... actually allowing yourself to experience the Mercy and Love of God.



From the Prophet Isaiah 5:1-6

Let me now sing of my friend, my friend's song concerning the vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside; he spaded it, cleared it of stones, planted the choicest vines; within it he built a watch tower, and hewed out a winepress. Then he looked for the crop of grapes, but what it yielded was wild grapes. Yes I will make of it a ruin.

Song of Songs 2:11-13

For see the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning vines has come and the song of the dove is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs and the vines in bloom give forth fragrance.

Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come away.

*The fig is struggling
while the vines are flourishing...*

Which areas of your life easily bear fruit?

Which are the stunted or barren areas?

What are they most in need of?