

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

**Or**

When I prove my holiness among you, I will gather you from all the foreign lands; and I will pour clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your impurities, and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 102)

**ANTIPHON:** The Lord is kind and merciful.

**RESPONSE:** The Lord is kind and merciful.

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** 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!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12; Luke 13:1-9

**NEXT WEEK** (4th Sunday Lent, Year C) Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 33; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

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## Where to find repentance



We might understand saying sorry, or an apology, forgiveness, even reconciliation and healing, but often we're uncertain what part repentance plays in our lives. Yet it's the very first thing that Jesus calls us to in the gospels and in Lent it's front and centre. So, in today's gospel we hear two stories: firstly, the tragic story of the Galileans murdered by Herod in the temple. Jesus' response to it is quite unexpected because he asks the people, do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than those Galileans who survived? "No", he says, and urges us in the light of a coming judgment to repent of our self-serving or it will be the ruin of us.

The second story is the fig-tree parable which offers hope that God will be patient; but there is a point when the gardener will have to say enough if, after patient tending, the tree still bears no fruit. There's an underlying urgency in this, but God is at work so that we may bear fruit.

If we're uncertain about repentance, one writer has noted, it's there in the 12-step program to recovery from addiction, where participants begin by owning that they're powerless and their lives have become unmanageable. It's also a reminder that repentance is one step towards finding peace.

That's where we all come to, most often unable, or unwilling, to see ourselves in this way. We say we can manage

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our shortcomings, or issues, with some assistance from God at times, so when the going gets tough, we get on with our lives, occasionally wondering what, or who, is absent from them, but trudging on.

At those tough moments in our lives – of failure, betrayal, death – we might pray earnestly to God, but there comes a breakthrough point when we realise we need to let God be in our lives, rather than make use of him, however openly, or subtly, we go about it. A god made in our own image, who does our bidding, is not the God made real to us in Jesus Christ. And it's this deep reluctance to get real we're wanting to name and repent of in Lent. This has implications for us all, because it's never simply a private matter, which means we're in this together.

We'll only be able to repent if we take to heart what the psalm says: 'The Lord is kind and merciful'. That's who 'I Am', the God of the burning bush, who appears to Moses in the first reading: trust in his love. In the second reading we're reminded that we're living at the end of the age and we're cautioned not simply to trust in our own efforts to feel safe: trust in his love.

Because the only place where repentance will happen is where there is love, where we are loved, in the company of one another. This is the life offered to us, here and now, in Jesus Christ.

**Damian Coleridge**

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