

## Lenten Meditations from All Saints' Parishioners

### Reflecting on the Upcoming Sunday's Gospel



#### Luke 13:31-35 | Gospel for Sunday, March 16

##### The Lament Over Jerusalem

*Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*



#### March 10: A Lenten Meditation on Luke 13:31-35

By Malinda Snow

Jesus asks a hard question: "What is the kingdom of God like?" (Luke 13:18). If asked, most of us would fumble for words. But Jesus's metaphors afford us steps towards the answer. He speaks of the mustard seed, for example, growing into a great tree. He speaks of yeast, a spoonful of which has power to lift a mass of dough. What is the kingdom of God like? As we keep reading, we hear Jesus saying, "You will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Earlier, He had lamented, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you!" (Luke 13:34).

Clearly Jesus did not find Jerusalem to be open to His message of repentance and salvation. And thus he cries, "O Jerusalem," having been scorned or dismissed there. We can infer that the Kingdom of God is a place and a state of mind, where one who "comes in the name of the Lord" is recognized and welcomed, and moreover, that the kingdom of God is a scene of healing and rebirth. We can associate "coming in the name of the Lord" with the word *apostle*, meaning "one who is sent." Like the little seed or the spoonful of yeast, God's kingdom is a mental place or state where something full of life and promise, though apparently dry and dead, can take root and grow. "Blessed is he who comes." There's lots of coming and going here. We may be the messenger, or the recipient of the message. But it is our business to hear, to reflect, to accept, and to tell the good news. Salvation requires apostles' telling and listeners' hearing, receiving, and accepting the good news. As you proceed through Lent and towards Easter, ask yourself how you will go about seeing Jesus, so that you can respond, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

## **March 11: Lenten Reflection on Luke 13:31-35**

By Alan Gibby



It took me several readings of this passage and many daily walks thinking about it to finally grasp a message coming through Luke's words. Two thoughts began to emerge: one: in the face of adversity, don't give up, accept the challenge and move forward; and two: be proactive. Christ is being warned by the Pharisees that Herod wants to kill him, but he refuses to submit to his threats. Instead, he continues to "cast out demons and perform cures." He is not intimidated by the king and is determined to pursue his mission. He understands that he must eventually enter Jerusalem and face his death, but that end merely inspires him to continue his teachings and healings. In doing so, he doesn't slink away to some remote village. No, he charges forward, today, tomorrow and the third day performing his miracles and proclaiming, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

This passage reminded me of a significant challenge that I faced in 2006. I was diagnosed with stage 4 Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. The diagnosis came from nowhere as I had led a very healthy lifestyle, ate well, and exercised regularly. I had a choice to do nothing or to face some rigorous chemotherapy. I put my trust in God and the doctors and said, "Let's charge ahead with the treatments!" Thankfully, the chemo worked. With a lot of love and support from my wife and family and friends, I endured the process and am now a cancer survivor.

I am sure that I will face many more challenges, just as Christ did, and I need to persevere in the face of those obstacles. As daunting as some of those challenges might be, I need not wallow away in self-pity for that accomplishes nothing. With hope and resolve and with God's blessing, Christ demonstrates for us that by acting and moving forward, we need to accept the challenges and put our trust in God. Christ is urging us to grasp the challenges we face and address them with strength, courage and faith.

## **March 12: A Meditation on Luke 13:31-35**

By Steve Richardson

There will always be Herods.

Prophets may be right. They may be doing the Lord's work. But they are not exempt from the consequences of evil. In fact, by forging ahead, true to their star, they are calling attention to themselves, inviting retribution. Evil will have its day, and sometimes their heads on a platter.

The only soul-saving choice seems to be where and when to face the forces of Wrong, our proverbial "hill to die on." Death is inevitable, either here or "somewhere else," physical death or the loss of our sequined ragdoll egos.

There is also a consolation, however dim or hazy in the distance: God's longing to gather us in. Jesus's challenge offers the hopeful fulfillment that comes with a life of honest witness. Knowing this, we may even find ourselves able to pity the inevitable suffering of our persecutors; and recall the hobbling fear of those (just like ourselves in all the ways that matter) who scramble to avoid painful reality.

Jesus is offering hope and compassion, but not immunity, even for himself. Press on, he

seems to be telling us, and find your own Jerusalem.

### **March 13: A Meditation on Luke 13:31-35**

By Ethel Ware Carter



The fox is in the henhouse! That fox Herod is charged with the welfare of Jerusalem and the henhouse is desolate. Why were the people unwilling to be gathered to safety like chicks under the wings of a hen? It is not hard to think of times when I was drawn to the shiny golden things, majestic music, the pomp of power displayed, or the success I thought I could earn by myself. . . all so much more seductive than familiar dusty feathers.

And the fox, the fox is just being a fox; he cannot resist his favorite food, fresh pullet. The fox is in the henhouse speaks to putting a creature in charge who cannot help but give in to temptation. There is another phrase for this in German, appointing the goat as gardener of the cabbages. The fox, the goat, Herod, someone put in a position of responsibility for which he is not just incompetent, but where he will cause great destruction.

The glitter and power of this world distract the children and corrupt the keeper. What a fall from glory for the city whose memory is desire of every Hebrew's heart. What a warning for us! But look, Jesus says "you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The one who comes in the name of the Lord, not in the name of Herod or the empire. We are reminded again that we cannot have two lords. And, we are reminded that the salvation promised by worldly rulers is a false safety; they have always failed, and they always will. The call is surely to look to that One, to look for that One, the One who comes in the name of the Lord, for deliverance.



### **March 14: Meditation on Luke 13:31-35**

By David Cross

Purpose. The clarity and determination to face whatever lies in our path and move forward. Even when explicitly threatened with his own death, Jesus seemed to scoff and refused to be distracted. He resolved to fulfill His purpose of providing healing and deliverance, bringing God's message of peace and love to more people. He had a job to do, so he picked up his proverbial lunch pail and kept going. It was His mission as

the true prophet of God.

How am I to know what to do when everyday seems to pile on new uncertainties? Do not be deceived by the powers that be, who incessantly tell you what to think and do; trust in your heart that there is a better way with God. I am told to let go of my worldly anxieties and surrender to the peace of God that surpasses my understanding. The mystery of that peace is that it opens the door for me to see God's will for my life. And once inside, it provides the strength and conviction for me to actually live God's will for my life. That is my purpose. Unique to me, but available if I'm willing to stop and listen as God is always with me. As St. Catherine of Genoa exclaimed, "My deepest me is God!" In my own way, I too am a prophet serving the divine mission of God.

## March 15: Meditation on Luke 13:31-35

By Jordan Hall



This is a weird, funny passage — spicy, as the kids say. “Go and tell that fox” always catches me off guard. It turns out Jesus isn’t above the occasional insult.

But there’s more. In nearly every English translation I can find, the specific phrase is “that fox,” and the “that” increases the offense, I think. It’s both overfamiliar and dismissive. He won’t even name his would-be executor.

And maybe that’s the point. Herod is a political title, after all, and this Herod is no different than the rest, including the one who already tried to kill him. Each fails to understand who Jesus is or what his plans are.

So, as if to avoid any confusion, Jesus lays it all out. “Listen,” he says — and I wonder if he took a deep breath here — “I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.”

If the scene ended there, I’d chalk it up as an especially heated rebuke that culminates in a judgment against Jerusalem.

But Jesus goes on, renewing the metaphor. If a Herod is a fox, Jesus is a hen. Foxes are clever and cunning. Chickens are, from my understanding, neither. But Jesus doesn’t want to be a fox. Jesus wants to gather his children under his wings, if only they would let him. On the surface, this image seems like a calm, comforting image, but according to N. T. Wright, what Jesus is actually describing is how a hen behaves to protect her chicks when a fire breaks out in a barn.

So like I said, it’s a weird passage, which reveals Jesus’ character and mission in a series of subtle and not-so-subtle ironies. There’s a sense of urgency, or righteous impatience. It reminds me of a scene in *The Two Towers* when Gandalf scolds a political opportunist not unlike Herod. “The wise speak only of what they know ... I have not passed through fire and death to bandy words with a serving-man till the lightning falls.”

Just then, thunder sounds in the distance.