

Lent 3C – 2022

Anecdotes from <https://frtonyshomilies.com/>

Sin and tragedy:

Pastors often encounter people who have suffered tragedy that they imagine to be caused by their own guilty state. This text calls us to balance two opposing ideas:

- On the one hand, **tragedy sometimes strikes randomly**, as it did in the case of the Galileans and the eighteen Jerusalemmites. In such cases, it has nothing to do with guilt. The tornado that destroys a nightclub also destroys a church—kills both the town drunk and a Sunday school teacher. However, our repentance stands us in good stead when we experience unavoidable tragedy. It prepares us to live victoriously in the face of tragedy, and it also prepares us for death.
- On the other hand, **sin sometimes leads to tragedy**. Drunk drivers kill innocent people. Abusive people injure their spouses and children. Not all tragedy is the result of sin, but some is.

Perhaps the best way to visualize this is a small circle inside a large circle. The large circle is all tragedy. The small circle is tragedy caused by our sin. We cannot prevent random tragedy—that which lies outside the small circle—but Christ calls us to repent, so that we might avoid the self-imposed tragedy of the small circle. (sermonwriter.com).

"I am guilty, and I deserve to be here."

There is a story of how King Frederick II, an Eighteenth-Century King of Prussia, was visiting a prison in Berlin. He was going from inmate to inmate, and every one of them was trying to prove how they had been unjustly imprisoned. They all proclaimed their innocence, except one. That one prisoner was sitting quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence. Seeing him sitting there oblivious to everything else that was going on, the King walked over to him and said, "Son, why are you in here?" He said, "Armed robbery, your Honor," The King said, "Are you guilty?" He said, "Sire, I am guilty, and I deserve to be here."

The King then gave an order to the guard and said, "Release this guilty man — I do not want him corrupting all these innocent people!" — Today's Gospel is Jesus' call to repentance.

"The Lord is loving, compassionate, kind, and merciful."

The story is told of a young corporate executive named Bill who gave in to temptation and was discovered as being guilty of embezzlement. He was called into the office of the company president. He feared the worst. Mr. Johnson asked, "Bill, did you do it?" Bill ducked his head in embarrassment and muttered, "Yes, sir." Mr. Johnson continued, "You made a bad decision. I know that you realize it. You are the second one in this room who made a bad choice. Thirty years ago I did the same thing you did, and a very kind and forgiving man gave me another chance. I'm going to give you the mercy and grace that I received that day. Now get to work." Hearing this, Bill was stunned. Quietly, he left the office laden with gratitude and unforgettable relief. (*Fr Lakra*).

In a similar way, God gives to us what we do not deserve. Whenever we commit sins, He forgives us and gives us another chance, for "The Lord is loving, compassionate, kind, and merciful."

"Go home and love your spouse and your children."

Mother Teresa was once asked by an inquiring reporter what people could do to bring about World Peace and improve the conditions of our world.

Without hesitation she said, "Go home and love your spouse and your children."

Mother Teresa is so greatly admired and respected because she feasts on forgiveness. Bitterness has no place in her soul and spirit. Fast from bitterness and you'll get rid of half the medication you are presently taking!