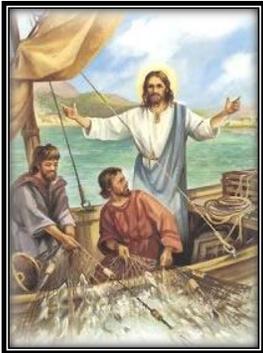


## ✠ A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR ✠



### YOU TOO WERE GIVEN ANOTHER YEAR, SO REPENT



The Pastor's Message for I Sunday Lent (14 February) in Our Holy Redeemer's Sunday Bulletin, challenged its readers to "put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch" (Saint Luke V:4) in hopes that more people would *return to the Lord with their whole heart* (cf. Joel ). And so it happened on II Sunday Lent (21 February) when people (**perhaps your husband/daughter/brother/friend/co-worker/neighbour/someone YOU caught**) returned to the Lord at 37 South Ocean Avenue, discovered Him in *the breaking of the bread* (cf. Saint Luke XXIV:35), followed Him with Saints Peter, John, and James up a mountain, were awakened to the Transfiguration, and heard Our Father, Who art in Heaven say of Jesus: "This is My Beloved Son. Listen to Him" (Saint Luke IX:35).

Forty days transpired between the Transfiguration and the time of the Lord's Good Friday-exodus, and Saints Peter, John, and James (who would also accompany Him into the Garden of Gethsemane the night before that exodus took place) had many opportunities to "listen to Him" during that time. They listened to Him teach about mercy with help from the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* (cf. Saint Luke X). They listened to Him call God "Our Father" as He taught *how to pray* (cf. Saint Luke XI). They listened to Him warn about hypocrisy: the *leaven of the Pharisees* (cf. Saint Luke XII). And in the Gospel for the III Sunday Lent (28 February)/today's Gospel, they listened to Him twice say (referencing current events where-in people died unexpectedly): "if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did." (Saint Luke XIII:3b, 5b)



In both current events cited by Jesus in today's Gospel, the people were "cut down" unexpectedly. Their deaths were not the consequence of their sins or their wrongdoings which Jesus makes clear when He says that *by no means were they greater sinners or more guilty than others* (cf. Saint Luke XIII:3a, 5a). It is the "unexpected" nature of their deaths that Jesus uses to lead His listeners to repentance. That is the lesson of the fig tree. (cf. Saint Luke XIII:6-9)

The tragic current events cited by Jesus didn't take the lives of Saints Peter, John, and James. They were – like the fig tree in the Parable - given another "year" to bear fruit. You too have been given another *year*. If you survived the 2001 terrorist attacks that took the lives of over 3000 people in the United States, or the 2012 terrorist attack that took the lives of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and U.S. Foreign Service Information Management Officer Sean Smith in Benghazi, then you too were given another *year*. If you survived the 1999 shooting that took the lives of 15 people at a High School in Columbine, or the 2007 shooting that took the lives of 33 people at Virginia Tech, or the 2012 shooting that killed 28 people at an Elementary School in Sandy Hook, then you too were given another *year*. If you survived the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami that killed over 250,000 people, or the 2010 earthquake in Haiti that killed over 100,000 people, then you too were given another *year*. And if therefore you were given another *year*, then the time is now for you to **go fishing for your husband/daughter/brother/friend/co-worker/neighbour/someone!** The time is now for you to "repent and believe in the Gospel."

