MARCH 9, 2026 FATHER PETER TURRONE

We're well into the season of Lent. And it's always good to remind ourselves of what the season is all about. We are preparing, as we heard at the beginning, right, of the season, we're preparing to celebrate the Paschal mysteries.

So, for those who are catechumens, who are not yet baptized, alright, this is a period of intense formation. For those of us who are baptized, where we receive the sacraments of initiation, it's a time to prepare ourselves to renew our baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday.

So, what is it that we do? Well, we fast, we pray, and we give alms. So we do these, the are means to an end. Right? So, prayer of course is that union with God. But the fasting is a way of stripping ourselves of whatever is an impediment to deeper intimacy with God. So, when we are giving alms, we're reminding ourselves of the need for justice, right, towards God and towards our neighbour. And also as a way to remember that we are not islands on our own, but we are in communion with other people. And we have this responsibility God has given us to care for our brothers and sisters in need.

So looking at today's readings, right, we can look at it from many different angles. But one of the angles that we can look at it, and to understand what God is speaking to us about, is really one of the sins that we can struggle with, one of the big temptations. Right, if not necessarily a sin in our lives, but that toward pride, towards self-sufficiency. Where we are the king of our own household, we think that we know everything, and that we have no need for other people. Or we

know everything, and we know people so well there's nothing else to learn about them.

So, if we have this attitude of pride, it becomes a big problem for us. And we can see that already in the first reading. So we hear that Naaman is upset, right, he's upset because he was told to do something very simple. He thought there would have to be this great, elaborate liturgy. Right, there'll be this whole big thing that everybody would have to participate in, in order to receive God's healing. But it wasn't that way. In fact, it was much more simple.

And of course, we have a tendency, alright, to want to complicate things. And so, it was this young girl, this servant, who says to him, Just do what's asked of you. Again, so from the mouth of a babe. From this simple, kind, humble soul. Right, and eventually he listens. And when he does it, something that's so simple, doesn't require a lot of work, he receives the grace of a healing.

So, when we look at the sin of pride in the context of today's Gospel reading, we see it, how it's even more dramatic, and how pride can lead us to horrible things. Just like you see in Jesus' own people that he lived with. In his own town. They actually tried to kill him. In the Gospel it says they tried to hurl him off a cliff.

So, why? What's the context here? Well at first, everybody's excited to hear Jesus speak. In fact, there's a round of applause, they're thrilled to hear what he's saying. Right, they realize that the scriptures are being fulfilled in their midst. So, all of this is good, so far. But, do they really understand what's happening? Or are they thinking about how it applies to themselves?

So, as we continue going along, and Jesus starts to speak about the healing, reminding us of the first reading. He's saying, Look, the

healing, the grace, is the blessings that were given, were given to someone who did not belong to their own household. Right, to their own clan, to their own group, their community. It was someone who was outside of that.

So, in their mind, they were furious. Because they believed that they were the right heirs. They should receive everything first, because they—Jesus belonged to them. So, they had control over him. And that was difficult for them, so when Jesus starts to remind them in fact, that they do not possess him, and that even though they lived with him, and they would see each other in the synagogue, they would maybe eat together... Right, so they would go to him for business, right, the Lord was a tekton, so he was a carpenter and general labourer. So they would've known him for many years, during those quiet years in Nazareth. They still thought that they knew him through and through.

But they didn't realize that he is also God. He's the God man. And they are unwilling to accept that. So, this familiarity breeds contempt within them. And this contempt leads them to want, again, to kill him. But the Lord passes through. He passes through.

So, how does this apply to ourselves? Right, in our daily walk with the Lord? Well, the first thing is going back to the first reading. Is that we have a tendency to want to overcomplicate things. And, yes, it's true, life is—has many different dimensions to it. And we can't always see everything—reduce things to a soundbite, or to a tweet, or something we post in a few words on social media. It's easier for us to assimilate that than the complexity of reality. Okay, yes…

But when it comes to God and a simple heart, when we pray to him, the Lord just wants us to be open to receive what he wants to give us. We don't have to overcomplicate things, even in our prayer life. Just to be

present to the Lord, to sit before him. Adoration, if we can, is a beautiful gift. Alright, just sit before the Lord, and be in his presence, to receive what he wants to give us. Without overcomplicating things.

And then the second thing, is not to assume that we know someone through and through. During the cardinals' dinner last year, Cardinal Leo, he was quoting a French philosopher. It was a beautiful quote, and he was saying, Do we look to see people as problems, or do we look to see people as mysteries? The reality is you and I don't even know ourselves through and through. How can we proclaim to know someone else, completely and entirely? It's not possible. It's not possible, so to step back in humility, and to recognize that we are a mystery, that other people are a mystery, and to respect them as such, and to care for them as we can.

Saint Frances of Rome, whose feast we celebrate today, she was this type of woman. She was married when she was very young, she love the Lord above all things, she served him, and then little by little, she started to serve the poorest of the poor, in Rome. And the thing that guided her was the Gospel, and the rule of Saint Benedict.

And, just to end, Saint Benedict has many beautiful things to say in the rule, which I would highly recommend reading, and he says the following. He says, "Listen to the youngest, because oftentimes the Spirit speaks through them." They youngest is not just in terms of chronological age, but also maybe someone who's newer to the faith. Alright, we shouldn't assume that we know everything. Be open to listen to what younger people have to say. The newer people that are coming to the faith. They may have something to teach us as well.