

Lent III Sunday March 27

The Community Shares the Dream – the Trees become Groves and Forests

Scripture: James 5:7 – 8a, 11 (NRSV)

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient....Indeed we call blessed those who show endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Do you remember the story about Justin from last week? Do you remember what a sapling is and the name the people of Haiti called the little sacks?

Let's continue our story from last week.

Can you imagine how hard it is to grow a little sapling into a great big tree? After Justin's death, the people knew they needed a plan if their Pepinye were to become real forests on the mountainsides. They had watched people to the mountains and try to help by planting trees which were not native to Haiti. All along roadsides and pathways these people planted trees and put plastic sleeves around them so the goats would not eat them and no one would take them. The goats didn't eat them but always those trees were cut down, either in the middle of the night for firewood or by passers-by who needed them for construction. No one was able or willing to protect them.

What did they do? The people of St. Etienne had a different idea. They gave some their land for the Pepinye. They prepared the land, planted and watered the saplings, put up barbed wire fences around the saplings, and watched over and protected them. Every family that helped got trees for themselves to plant near their houses for shade and for food.

Have you ever seen a barbed wire fence? What does it look like?

Barbed wire looks like this -



Building a fence to protect the trees

Everyone decided to plant only trees which were native to Haiti – no trees from America or anywhere else. They made a list of all the trees what always grew in Haiti that always grew in Haiti. These were the only trees they wanted to plant.

They planted trees for firewood and fruit trees. They planted mango, orange, grapefruit, and banana trees and family got trees for fruit to eat. And then they waited to see if the trees would grow together into forests. And the trees grew and the children had fruit to eat and warm houses to sleep in and the mothers had wood to make fires to cook with.

How many kinds of trees can you name? What do trees do for us? Have you eaten a mango? Did you have a banana this morning? Did you drink orange juice? If you did, your breakfast was just like what the children in St. Etienne's ate this morning. Can you imagine how happy the children were when they ate fruits from trees near their homes?



Banana tree



Mango tree



Orange tree

Prayer: O Spirit you inspire us with many ideas to help ourselves and each other. Give us patience and wisdom and power to take those ideas and turn them into reality for the good of all your people. All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.