

## Homily for 3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent

### Cycle B John 2. 13-25

This third Sunday of Lent we read from the Book of Exodus of the Ten Commandments. We need to pay close attention to the First three commandments: You shall not have other gods besides me, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath day – NO work shall be done then either by you, or your son or daughter. The first three commandments identify for us how to build a relationship with God.

There are two important things which Jesus reveals to us today. First; Jesus runs out of the temple all the people selling oxen, sheep, doves and the money changers. The Temple was important to Jesus and he had the deepest respect for the Temple. It was in the Temple that Joseph and Mary presented Him forty days after his birth (Lk. 1.22-39). At the age of 12 he decided to remain in the Temple to remind his parents that he must be about His Fathers business. He went there each year during His hidden life at least for the Passover. His public ministry itself was patterned by his pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great Jewish feasts. (CCC 583)

So for Jesus the Temple was the dwelling of His Father, a house of prayer, and He was angered that its outer court had become a place of commerce. Jesus exposes the faulty behavior of the Jews, especially that of the Pharisees which is the sin of avarice (a love for riches). St Thomas Aquinas write, “mention is made of two land animals, which according to the law could be offered to the Lord: the ox and the sheep. The third land animal offered, the goat, is implied when he says sheep, similarly, the turtle-dove is included when he says doves.” Many did not have animals to sacrifice so the priests set up a means for people to buy them, “the priests set up money-changers who would lend money to those” who came without sacrifice.

Jesus drove the merchants out because of love for his Father. Jesus says “take these out of here, and stop making my Fathers house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of scripture, “*Zeal for your house will consume me.*” (quoting from Psalm 69.9). Zeal signifies an intensity of love, whereby the one who loves intensely does not tolerate anything which is repugnant to His love. Please note that John states Jesus was angered, but NOT a sinful anger for he desired NOT to hurt anyone or anything. Because of His ultimate love for the Father Jesus chases the merchants out of the Temple. I ask that you recall our first reading, are NOT the merchants violating the Ten Commandments- especially the

second and third!! But the Jews ask Him by what sign or authority do you do this? Jesus begins to unveil or reveal in John 2 that HE is the Son of God.

The second item we hear in Jesus' response "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." St. John places this event right after the Wedding feast at Cana, John 2. Please note how John clearly identifies exactly what Jesus was speaking about, HIS BODY, speaking about His resurrection. Jesus was revealing who He was and who sent Him. Now these words which Jesus spoke would be used against Him when He is arrested and tried. This statement is foretelling of His eventual death and Resurrection, although His disciples would not fully understand this until after His resurrection.

St. John tells us that many began to believe in Him when they saw the signs He was doing. This correlates to what many people believe today; that is show me a sign. But Jesus tells the Apostle Thomas, "You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn. 20.29).

During the time Jesus was on earth many came to believe because they could see the signs and miracles Jesus worked. Yet believing occurs not only by signs Jesus performs but also encounters with Jesus. We are about to witness a miracle, to have an encounter as we prepare for the consecration of the bread and wine into the body. Blood soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. We are about to have an encounter with Jesus. Let us enter this encounter with not only our eyes wide open but our hearts. Let us use the remainder of this Lenten season to truly prepare our hearts and souls, to strive to be holy, as our Holy Family is.

Jesus is inviting each and every one of us to His Father's house, Our Fathers house! To honor and respect the Fathers house. To use and enter the Fathers house. Jesus is calling upon us to prepare for the Resurrection, it is coming. We should make a good confession, attend Mass, and receive the Eucharist. We are called to embrace and strengthen our faith, hope and love right here and right now at this Mass.

As we prepare to accept the invitation from Jesus Himself to witness a miracle in His Fathers house let us invite Jesus to abide in us. Let us receive the Eucharist worthily and reverently so we, with our hearts and eyes wide open may grow in love with Our Father!