

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**My eyes are always on the Lord,
for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor.**

COLLECT

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our
lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our
conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Exodus 20:1-17

(For shorter form, read between > <)
A reading from the book of Exodus.

>God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 'You shall have no gods except me.<
'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me; but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

>'You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.<

'Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your animals nor the stranger who lives with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.

>'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you.
'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 18

Response:

You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple. (R.)
2. The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes (R.)
3. The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just. (R.)
4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord,
whoever believes in me will never die.
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

GOSPEL

John 2:13-25

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up

in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next three lines)**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings,
and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins,
may take care to forgive our neighbour.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive the pledge
of things yet hidden in heaven
and are nourished while still on earth
with the Bread that comes from on high,
we humbly entreat you, O Lord,
that what is being brought about in us in mystery
may come to true completion.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

4 MARCH 2018

Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: Purple • Psalter Week 3



Jesus Cleanses the Temple: scene in the church Chiesa di San Gaetano, by unknown painter from 17th century

The episode in today's Gospel reading, usually called *The Cleansing of the Temple*, shows Jesus in an unfamiliar and unusual light: he is angry, in a rage which leads him to violent behaviour.

He refers to the Temple in Jerusalem, as "my Father's house". This place, the focus of Jewish worship, was intended to provide privileged access to the divine presence: however, it is being used as an opportunity for making money. The activities described were all in fact legitimate: whether they were appropriate in that sacred setting seems to be the question.

One of the themes running through the Fourth Gospel is that Jesus in his person replaces the important feasts and institutions of Judaism. The Temple, known in Hebrew as *the house of the Lord*, was the place where God was present in the inner sanctuary known as the *Holy of Holies* (that is, the Holiest Place). The dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders uses the literary method of misunderstanding, in which the word *sanctuary* is taken by Jesus' listeners to mean the Temple building, whereas he is speaking of his body. John is telling us that as a result of Jesus' being lifted up on the cross, he will himself become the place in which people will be able to encounter the living God.

The Jewish authorities, referred to in the Fourth Gospel as *the Jews*, represent people of a hostile attitude who will not accept Jesus and his message. Throughout the Gospel we find different types of people who demonstrate different reactions to Jesus. Here, the disciples have a limited belief in Jesus which will only be resolved by the resurrection. For John, true faith means believing in the word of Jesus: and this faith requires the person to decide whether or not to believe. ■

LEARN

In the Fourth Gospel, the term *the Jews* refers to the Jewish leaders who are hostile to Jesus and his message: it does not refer to the Jewish people as a whole.

The Fourth Evangelist uses the term *signs* to denote the works of Jesus commonly called *miracles*.

In the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, miracles are described as *works of power*.

The noun *faith* does not occur in the fourth Gospel: the verb *to believe* is found well over one hundred times. Faith for John is not something we possess but something we do or put into action.

DO

The next time you are tidying up or throwing out the rubbish, think of Jesus cleaning up the Temple: apply this to your Lenten practice.



SAY

You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

REFLECT

Anyone who has visited Lourdes or a similar shrine knows what it is like to run the gauntlet of rows of stalls selling religious objects and souvenirs of doubtful artistic merit. The story of Jesus driving out the merchants might come to mind on such occasions and we can sympathise with him losing his temper. In both situations traders are coming between the pilgrims and their destination and the scene is one of clutter and chaos. Jesus is saying, *Take these things out of here! Get rid of this mess!*

Perhaps this is one message we might think about today as we make our way through Lent. What things are cluttering our lives and coming between us and our feeling the presence of the Lord? Sometimes it is more comfortable to leave things as they are, to settle for the familiar ways of thinking and acting that we are used to. But Lent is a time to reflect and to take drastic action where it is needed. St Paul tells us that the body of the Christian is the Temple of the Holy Spirit: what is there in your life which is not worthy of that Temple – and what are you going to do about it? ■