

Sunday, March 7, 2021

3rd Sunday of Lent

Holy Investments!

“Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.” - John 2:13-25

Have you ever been so angry at a situation that you explode in the presence of others? Most of us have, and it can be a frightening sight. Most parents know what I’m talking about. On the surface, it appears that is what is happening in this weekend’s Gospel from St. John. Most of us have heard the story of Jesus angry in the temple with the money changers. He is so upset that He drove everyone out while overturning tables and creating what we’d call a public “scene.”

This passage can be studied in many ways. On the surface, Jesus is condemning those who are using holy ground to make a profit. In today’s world, it takes the generosity of many to keep the Church going. When churches and religious leaders focus their attention on the financial operation and income versus the spiritual needs of the Church, this can be of a detriment to the worshiping community. This is one aspect of the passage.

Another angle is that Jesus is confirming His authority to the Jews and those in the temple. Those running the market question Him for causing such a disturbance. He answered them by

stating that what has taken 46 years to build, He could raise up in 3 days. Our Lord was teaching the point that, while the building is built with stone and mortar, the spiritual temple, who is Jesus, will never be destroyed. Even though the temple of His body will die on the cross, He will be raised up in just 3 days. He is reminding us that in a very overt fashion, that we should build up the kingdom in prayer, mercy, hope, and love, and not solely by money or material things.

In our own lives, do we worship money and material things, or do we put our faith in God? Do we spend our time worrying about our investments in the stock market, or do we invest our time in proclaiming Jesus as Lord and treating others with the same love and respect we would give to Jesus?

- Bishop Gregory Parkes