



THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (B) Sunday 7th March 2021

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Sunday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your Sunday prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

A: 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.

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

Introduction

L: Today's Gospel points us towards Holy Week and Easter – Jesus explicitly mentions the "three days" of his death, burial and resurrection, which he refers to as the "sign" the people ask for. In Saint John's Gospel "signs" or miracles are meant to create and deepen faith or belief. As we hear Jesus proclaiming himself the New Temple, let us ask that our faith in him might be ever strengthened. As we begin our prayers today, we think of our Lenten journey and humbly ask for God's forgiveness:

Penitential Act

L: You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

A: Christ, have mercy

L: You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

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, God, for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Gospel Reading

John 2:13-25

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.

A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection

*While the other Scripture readings in Church today make this a bit of a complicated Sunday, we will stick with the Gospel, this famous story of Jesus clearing the Temple. What's going on here? There are two main ideas: first, Jesus cleanses the holy place of everything that stops it being holy – the cheats and swindlers and crooked exchange merchants. The meaning is simple: holy places must be holy! There is also a second theme – a more symbolic one: when Jesus "cleanses" the Temple, he is, in a sense, declaring it unnecessary. He is the New Temple, which will be destroyed and rebuilt in "three days" when he dies on the cross and rises again. The Temple was the place where God dwelt with his people: after Easter Sunday, that "place" will be Jesus himself. So, we do not need to travel to Jerusalem, to visit that building, to be close to God. All we need do is "visit" Jesus, the New Temple. We could add a third understanding of this Gospel, which helps us understand our Lenten journey. **We** are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, as the Scriptures tell us in several places. God wants to dwell within us. But as the Temple of God, do I need cleansing? Do I need Jesus to help clear (at best) the indifference and (at worst) the injustice, selfishness and cruelty that clutters up my life? "Decluttering" our homes has become something of a 'thing' lately (see Marie Kondo!) – Lent is time for the decluttering of our spiritual lives, and our relationship with God.*

For our Younger Friends

Most people hate tidying their room! And yet parents always seem to be going on about it! It is good to be tidy, though sometimes that means making the effort to move the

dirty clothes, or the dishes, or pack the toys and games away, and sometimes we just don't feel like it! Today we see Jesus "tidying" the holy place – the Temple. He wants God's house to be a place of prayer and worship, not a shop! People seem to have forgotten about God: it needs tidying up! Perhaps today have a think about tidying up – not your room, but your life! Make sure that God is welcome in your mind and thoughts and what you say and do. Be a shining bright Temple for God to live in!

If gathering as a family, perhaps now continue to discuss what this Gospel passage means to you. If alone, think about what key message you take from the Scriptures today.

Profession of Faith

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, 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.

Intercessions

L: As the living stones making up the Temple of the Lord, let us raise our minds and hearts in prayer for the Church and the world.

L: That our Church buildings may be places of holiness and purity, beacons of hospitality, healing and hope for all. Lord, in your mercy.

A: Hear our prayer.

L: That God's creation may be protected, nurtured and valued by all. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: That all who are still unable to go to Church may know they are still part of the Body of Christ and are

Temples of the Holy Spirit. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: That our deceased brothers and sisters may rejoice in the presence of the eternal Father, and mourners know comfort. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

L: Be pleased, O Lord, with our prayers and sacrifices, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Before Spiritual Communion

L: Loving Father, you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure. At the Last Supper Jesus your Beloved Son showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church today, and not able to receive communion, we now open our minds and hearts to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

Spiritual Communion

A: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of

the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.

Thanksgiving Psalm

L: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

A: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

L: 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.

A: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

L: The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes.

A: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

L: The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just.

A: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

L: They are more to be desired than gold,

than the purest of gold and sweeter are they than honey, than honey from the comb.

A: You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Final Prayer and Blessing

L: Let us pray.

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven 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.

A: Amen.

L: May the Lord ✠ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord!

A: Thanks be to God!