

The Third Sunday of Lent March 4th 2018

Today's Gospel reading recalls a time when Jesus did some spring-cleaning to the Temple in Jerusalem. He had come to the Temple to celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover. The Passover was the greatest of the Jewish feasts and it drew all kinds of pilgrims from all over the world to this capital city of Judaism to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt centuries earlier. People came a long distance and so did not bring animals to sacrifice with them. They bought them on the spot. Because they came from all over the Roman Empire the various coins they had needed to be exchanged into the standard Temple currency.

A pilgrimage to the Temple was supposed to be a sacred experience. But that was destroyed by the atmosphere of the Temple where all this buying and selling and currency exchange got out of hand. At the Passover, the Temple became a shopping mall. Merchants were selling animals for sacrifice money changers were there trading currency at particularly exorbitant rates of exchange.

When Jesus saw this anger rose within him. Maybe we have seen some paintings of the scene. All around him is confusion. Merchants are holding up their arms to protect themselves. Tables are turned over. Animals are running away. Coins are spilt all over the place. Bystanders are dashing for cover. To use a modern idiom "Jesus was on a tare". What does it all mean?

Some say it is an instance of Jesus' righteous anger and it teaches us that there is such a thing as righteous anger when we see something that is wrong. Others say it was a fulfillment of a prophecy of the cleansing of the human race. Others say that Jesus throwing out the money changers means we should stop all second collections in church.

The Temple needed radical cleaning at that moment and once in a while so do our lives. That is what Lent is for. Our lives need cleaning just like our homes and offices do. With the passage of time, excess baggage useless junk and dust balls tend to accumulate. We can see that in our closets. Most closets are alike. There was a day when they were neat. Then we added some extra clothes hangers

**,put presents there we did not care for , stored old boxes in them
,hid items we thought we would throw out later.**

Just as our closets and the old Temple of old Jerusalem became cluttered our lives get cluttered ,our lives get cluttered in ways we never planned. How many of us live overextended lives lives Do we still have time for the children and for prayer? We all need spiritual spring cleaning. There are merchants and money changers that need to be driven out of our lives. They are the imperfections that grew into sins; small omissions that became major areas of neglect personal preoccupations that ripened into indifference to others; temptations that became sinful behaviors . Lent calls all of us to do some spring cleaning in our lives. AMEN.

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