

## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

YEAR B

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God who knows all things,  
you made us your children  
in the waters of our baptism.  
Keep us faithful to you  
by obeying your Son, Jesus,  
who lives with you,  
forever and ever.

### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

We live in a world broken by self-sufficiency and material greed.

Our first reading, the Ten Commandments, calls us to a just law which recognizes our dependence on God and the rights of our neighbor. The Gospel presents a seemingly harsh Jesus. In the sacred temple, Jesus lashes out against greed and selfishness, focuses our lives on God and the things of God, and reveals himself as the true "temple." Jesus was harsh with those who insisted on the letter of the Law but did not live its meaning. Our hope for salvation is not found in either doggedly following the Law (self-sufficiency) or in material wealth (greed) but in the Resurrection of Christ.

FIRST READING: *Exodus 20:1-4a, 7-8, 12-17.*

*This is a reading from the book of Exodus.*

God said:

"I am your God.

I brought you away  
from the country of Egypt  
and freed you from slavery.

"Therefore:

"You shall not believe in any other God  
but me.

"You shall not worship images of false gods  
or anything that has been made.

"You shall not say the name of God  
in a way that is not holy.

"Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

"Honor your father and your mother.

"You shall not kill.

"You shall not be unfaithful to your wife  
or husband.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not lie about your neighbor.

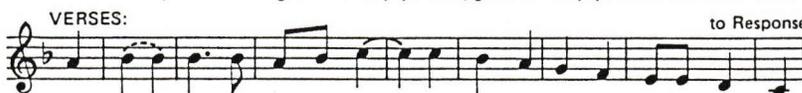
"You shall not be jealous  
about anything your neighbor owns."

*The Word of the Lord.*

RESPONSE: *Psalm 19*



Your law, O God gives us hap-pi-ness, gives us hap-pi-ness and new life.

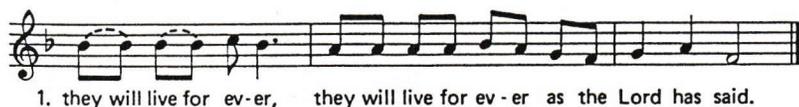


to Response

1. Your law, O God is good and just. — You help us all to fol-low your ways.
2. Your words — teach us what is right. — Your word, O God gives joy to my life.

*March 26, 2020*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



## GOSPEL: *John 2:13-16, 18-22*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of John.*

Jesus went up to Jerusalem  
to celebrate the feast of the Passover.  
Inside the temple,  
he saw people selling cattle  
and sheep and pigeons.  
And there were others changing money  
for the people.  
Jesus made a long whip  
and chased the cattle and the sheep  
out of the temple.  
He also knocked over the money tables,  
spilling the coins on the ground.  
He said to those who were selling pigeons,  
“Get them out of here!  
Stop using God’s house as a marketplace!”  
The Jews who were there said to Jesus,  
“What gives you the right to do this?  
What sign can you give us?”  
Jesus answered them,  
“Tear down this temple,  
and I will raise it up in three days!”  
The Jews said,  
“It took us forty-six years  
to build this temple!  
And you think you can raise it up  
in three days?”  
But the temple Jesus was talking about  
was his body.  
And later when he was raised from the dead,  
his disciples remembered that he said this,  
and they believed in him.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

This Gospel text is a difficult one for children. To be sure, it is action-packed and will no doubt have a high interest level! But the meaning of the action – that is, Jesus, the new temple, replaces the old system of worship in the temple in Jerusalem – is not a theme easily grasped by small children who, naturally, have a limited concept of historical time. Since we introduced the season of Lent as a special time to think about our lives and try to change our ways, a reflection on the Ten Commandments may serve us well this Sunday. The “law” appears elsewhere in this cycle, but in each case the Gospel takes priority in the reflections.

*After the first reading, ask the children what commandment they recall. As each response is given, ask the children for their reflection on that particular commandment. (Do not be concerned with the order of the commandments.)*

For example, you shall not lie about your neighbor. You might explore with them how we are all tempted to blame someone else to avoid taking responsibility (or punishment) for our own actions. For a child, this may mean lying about another child in order to gain friends.

The important point in any reflection of this sort is that it be appropriate to their age and behavior. For example, there seems little point in dwelling on the seventh commandment which simply is not relevant to them at this time. Or, with regard to “You shall not kill,” children may begin by repeating what they have heard adults say about war or capital punishment. Try to keep it on their level. Can we “kill” others by ignoring them? Does this commandment also tell us to take good care of our bodies so we will stay healthy?

It is important that the children see the Ten Commandments as a positive way we show our love for God and for our neighbor.

## Third Sunday of Lent

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### Anger in the temple

#### INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, "My father's house is a house of prayer." So when he came to the temple in Jerusalem and saw how people had pushed God to one side and allowed money and business to become more important, he was very angry.

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and sing the Candle Song together.

#### SORRY

Let us close our eyes and speak quietly to Jesus, asking his forgiveness for any mistakes we have made or things we have done wrong. (Allow a few moments for quiet reflection.)

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4.

#### GOSPEL (JOHN 2:13-22)

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He found the temple in Jerusalem full of people selling animals, and among them sat the money changers. He was very angry and overturned the tables of the money changers, scattering their coins everywhere.

He chased the animals and the merchants out of the temple shouting at them, "Take all of these things away and stop making my father's house into a market place!"

The temple priests tried to stop Jesus and asked, "What right do you have to act like this?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days."

"This temple took forty-six years to build! How could you rebuild it in three days?" they exclaimed. The temple which Jesus spoke of was his own body, and after his resurrection from the dead, his disciples would understand what Jesus had said that day.

#### DISCUSSION

The Jewish people gathered in the temple to pray and to offer sacrifices in God's honor. What did Jesus find in the temple?

Why do you think that the money changers and the animals were there? The animals were sold to those who wished to offer them as sacrifices to God. Ordinary money with the picture of Caesar on it could not be used in the temple. Instead, special temple coins were used to buy animals and to pay the temple taxes. The money changers' job was to exchange the Roman coins for the temple coins.

Jesus was angry because his father's house had become a market place, filled with people buying and selling, instead of being a place of prayer and respect.

Jesus told the people that if the temple was destroyed, he could rebuild it in three days. They thought that he spoke of the temple itself, which had taken forty-six years to build. But Jesus meant the temple of his own body, which would be destroyed by death on the cross but raised to life again after three days.

The house of God is a place of prayer where we can be close to God in a special way. When we visit someone else's home we are well-behaved and remember our manners, so, too, we should respect God's house when we go to church.

#### ACTIVITY

On a large sheet of paper, draw a temple background. Copy the animal and stall pictures enough times so that they can be cut out to make a busy temple scene. Add the angry figure of Jesus.

#### CREED

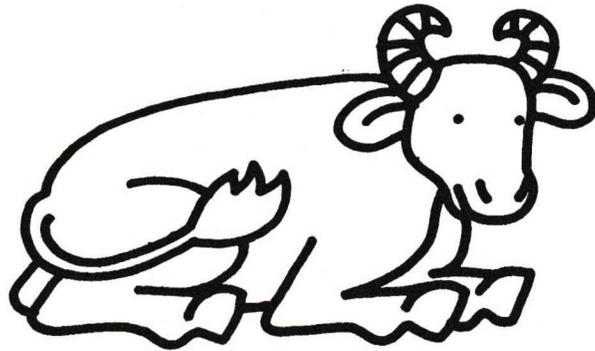
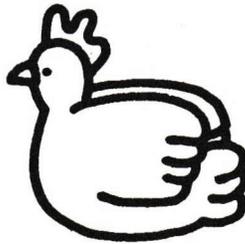
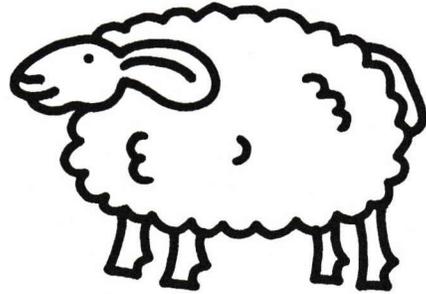
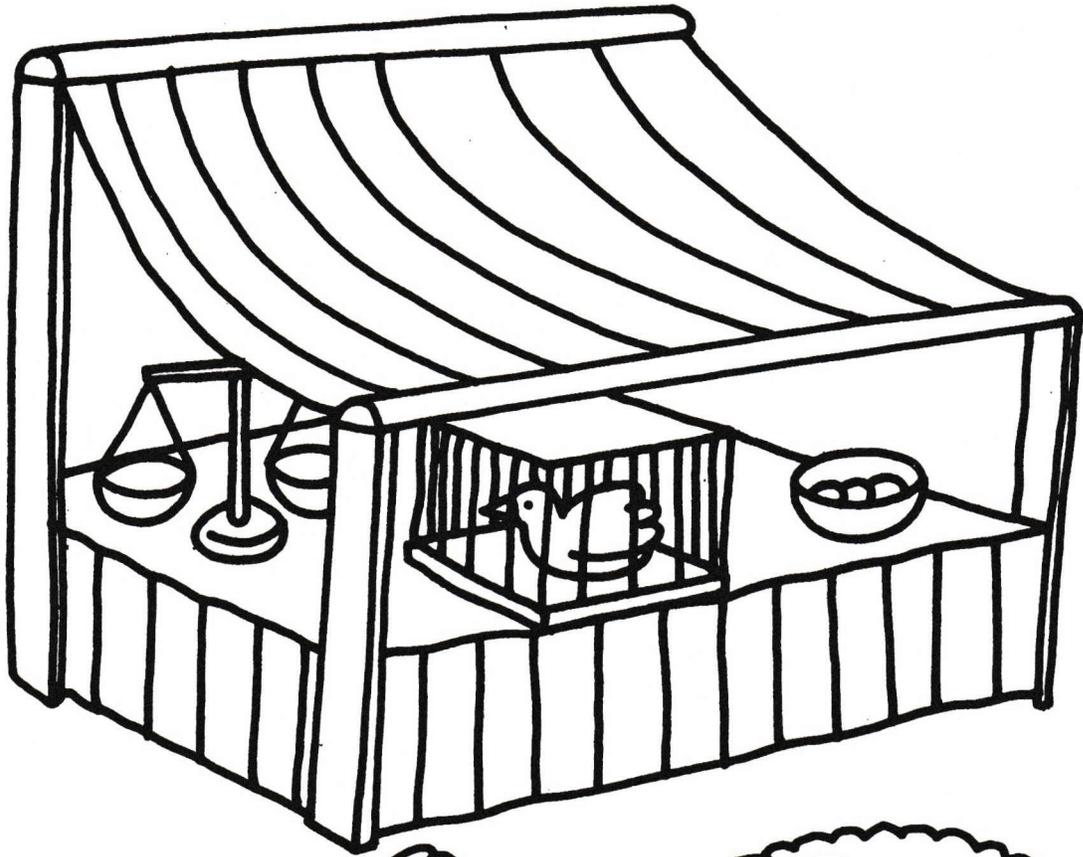
#### CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray for the family which has gathered here today in God's house to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection.

#### THINKING AHEAD

*(See discussion for the Fifth Sunday of Lent.)*

Sprinkle some seeds onto a piece of damp cotton or paper towel. Put the seeds in a light place and keep them damp. Tiny shoots will soon appear. Keep some of the dry seeds to show the children.



# Third Sunday of Lent

## Focus

A Bible open at today's Gospel reading, with coins scattered on and around it and a piece of twine or rope to represent a whip.

## Introduction

In the hearts and minds of the Jewish people, the Temple occupied a central place. It was a source of immense joy and comfort that there was in the heart of Israel, in the city of Jerusalem, a place where they could draw close to God. The Temple was God's house, the place where he promised that he would let his glory dwell.

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 8.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St John (2:13-25)  
(See page 379.)

## Reflection

*Why did people go to the Temple in Jerusalem?*

They went there to be close to God; to love, honour and give glory to him. The Temple was the holiest place for all Jews because God's presence there made it sacred. All faithful Jewish men were expected to attend at least one of the three annual pilgrimage feasts (Passover, Pentecost or Tabernacles).

*Which feast had Jesus gone to celebrate on this occasion?*

The Jewish festival of Passover is celebrated in memory of the Israelite people escaping from slavery in Egypt (see Exodus 14). About 200,000 pilgrims came to Jerusalem for this occasion, and the festival lasted for eight days.

*Why did Jesus find market stalls in such a holy place?*

People needed to buy animals and birds to offer for sacrifice according to the law, and the stallholders were there to provide suitable animals for the people to use in their worship of God.

*Why were money-changers sitting among them?*

Only 'Temple money' could be used inside the Temple to buy the animals and birds. The money-changers exchanged people's money for the special Temple coins.

*If these people were an everyday sight in the Temple, why did Jesus become so angry with them?*

Jesus saw into the hearts of the merchants and money-changers and knew that they were there because of their love of money, and not their love of God. They charged high prices for the animals they sold, and charged a high rate for exchanging the money that people could not do without. They were not there to help the people to worship God, but to take advantage of them and make themselves rich.

*How did Jesus express his frustration and anger with the money-changers?*

He made a whip and drove them out because their hearts were not giving glory to God. By chasing them

away Jesus 'cleansed' the Temple and made it holy and sacred again.

*What does this Gospel story tell us?*

God wants us to love and serve him with all our hearts and minds, and to recognise his holiness and sacredness in the world around us. Sometimes we become distracted by worldly things that lead us away from God's presence. Sometimes we are selfish and greedy, and do things for ourselves rather than for God. Lent is a time when we can take a look at our lives and see whether our hearts need to be 'cleansed', and whether what is important to us is important to God too.

*How could Jesus raise the Temple again in three days when it had taken 46 years to build?*

Jesus was talking about the temple of his own body. He is the new temple, where God is present and living among us. This temple was raised in glory after three days in the tomb, and is the place where human beings can draw close to the presence and glory of God. We too are temples of God because he is present and living within our hearts.

## Activity

Photocopy the template and cut out enough people figures to allow one each. Cut out small heart shapes from various colours of paper, and ask the children to write or draw acts of love or offerings they could make for God in the week ahead. Glue the hearts on to the figures to take home as a reminder.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We pray for countries facing famine, flood, drought or any kind of disaster.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the homeless and refugees who have lost everything they own.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the poor and all who hunger for food or love.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for peace in our world through understanding and forgiveness.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father, let our lives give praise and glory to your holy name, and make us fit to be called your sons and daughters. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

