

Third Sunday of Lent
March 4, 2018

The first reading this week tells us that God gave us Ten Commandments. As the name states, they are commandments, not suggestions. God directs us to live our lives by these rules. There are only ten. There are so few that following them shouldn't be impossible. He says follow these and you will be close to Him. Reviewing this list it seems that some commandments are easier to follow than others. The first three tell us how to treat God. The rest of them tell us how to treat other people, our neighbors. Interestingly, only two of the ten are positive statements and the rest are negative. So, the majority tell us what not to do, which makes it easier to confidently know we have followed that commandment. For instance, "you shall not steal" has been followed if you are not stealing. "You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain" may be harder for others to follow, but if you know you don't do it, then you have followed God's second commandment. Following the positive orders like "honor your father and your mother" may be more difficult especially for children that are frustrated with their parents. How do you know that you have fully honored them? God gave us the Ten Commandments to follow in order to live a holy life. They are not ours to pick and choose. We must live by ALL of them whether or not we find them hard to follow.

The Gospel reading recounts Jesus entering the temple where he has found a marketplace. The temple is the most sacred place of worship for the Jews. It represents God and Jesus is angered because the sacred purpose of the temple, to worship God, did not seem as important to the people selling animals outside. Jesus commands them to "stop making my Father's house a marketplace." Here He is stating that He is the Son of God. He orders everyone to get out and warns them that if they destroy the temple, he will rebuild it in 3 days. The Jews state that it has taken 46 years to build. No way could it be rebuilt in 3 days. Hearing the Gospel as a child, I imagined Jesus being able to rebuild it in three days because he IS Jesus. Remember the other miracles he has performed? What Jesus was actually referring to was himself as the temple. He was crucified, died and was buried and rose again in three days. The temple to the Jews was the most holy place. We learn that Jesus is our holy place not a structure.

Doesn't it seem that in today's world, like at the temple, God has taken a backseat? Things of "this" world seem to become more important. Like the people who "sold oxen, sheep and doves" at the temple, do we sometimes stray from making God the center of our life? We live in a very busy world with very busy lives. There are so many activities and so little time. It is so important to remember that God does so much for us. It is essential that we take time to worship Him and live the Ten Commandments.

Michelle Stenke