



Mary, Mother of Mercy Parish

<https://www.mary-mom.com/small-groups>

Gospel Reflection Small Group

Outline for week beginning March 7, 2021

Third Sunday of Lent; Year B

Lectionary: 29

Opening Prayer:

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Lord God, we open our hearts, minds and souls to worship to you. Thank you that today we dwell in your kingdom and live in your presence. Thank you that as we gather together we join with all Catholic Christians across the world to glorify your holy name. Come be with us, inspire us and lead us in our time together. We ask all this in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.

This Day in the Church:

Blessed Leonid Feodorov

Also known as

- Father Leontios
- Leonid F'odorov

Additional Memorial

27 June as one of the *Martyrs Killed Under Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*

Profile

Russian Orthodox family and upbringing. His father died when Leonid was very young, and he was raised by his mother, Liubova Dimitrievna. He started his studies in the Orthodox seminary in 1901, but in 1902 he left, travelled to Rome, Italy, and converted to Catholicism.



Studied at Anagni and Rome, and the Freiburg, Germany. Assisted at the coronation of Pope Pope Pius X on 9 August 1903. Doctorate in philosophy in 1905; degree in theology in 1907. Deacon on 22 March 1911, and ordained a Greek Catholic priest on 25 March 1911 in Bosnia. Monk at the Studite monastery in Bosnia, beginning his noviate on 20 May 1912 and admitted to the habit on 12 February 1913, taking the name Father Leontios.

He returned to Saint Petersburg and was immediately arrested for his faith, and sent to Siberia. Released in March 1917 during an amnesty for political and religious prisoners, he returned to Saint Petersburg, and was appointed Exarch of the Russian Greek Catholic Church. The Communist takeover later that year began a period of persecution of the faith and the faithful, with 1922 ushering in the era of violent suppression of Christianity. All churches were ordered closed on 5 December 1922. Father Leontios and fourteen priests were arrested for their faith in January 1923, sent to Moscow for trial; sentenced to ten years exile to Solovky and Vladka.

Released in 1926, he relocated to Kaluga. Arrested again for spreading the faith, he was sentenced to ten years in Solovetsky where a large monastery had been converted to a prison. There he continued to minister to the faithful, conducting covert Masses, using wine made from raisins sent by the families of prisoners. Transferred to forced labour camp at Pinega on 6 August 1929 where he was billeted with an imprisoned Orthodox priest; after work, Leontios conducted catechism class for local boys. Transferred to Arkhangelsk, to Kotlas, and to Poltava. The poor conditions and steady overwork broke his health, and in 1932 he was certified as an invalid. He completed his sentence in 1933, but was barred from returning to many Russian cities, and had to live in exile the rest of his life. One of the Martyrs Under Communism in Eastern Europe.

Born

4 November 1879 at Saint Petersburg, Russia

Died

- 7 March 1935 of "natural causes"
- buried at Kirov, Russia

Beatified

27 June 2001 by Pope John Paul II in Ukraine

Gospel Reading Background:

Cleansing of the Temple

Gospel Reading:

John 2:13-25

¹³ Since the Passover^(u) of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves,^(m) as well as the money-changers seated there. ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." ¹⁷ His disciples recalled the words of scripture, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸ At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² 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.

²³ 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. ²⁴ But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, ²⁵ and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Reflections:

1. What phrase or phrases mean the most to you? Why?
2. Who do you identify most with? Why?

3. How does this passage relate to:
 - a. You personally?
 - b. You spiritually?
 - c. Your relationship to others?

4. How might this useful practice of selling sacrificial animals have deteriorated into a racket? Why else was Jesus angry?

Study Guide:

2:13–22 This episode indicates the post-resurrectional replacement of the temple by the person of Jesus.

2:13 Passover: this is the first Passover mentioned in John; a second is mentioned in Jn 6:4; a third in Jn 13:1. Taken literally, they point to a ministry of at least two years.

2:14–22 The other gospels place the cleansing of the temple in the last days of Jesus' life (Matthew, on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem; Mark, on the next day). The order of events in the gospel narratives is often determined by theological motives rather than by chronological data.

2:14 Oxen, sheep, and doves: intended for sacrifice. The doves were the offerings of the poor (Lv 5:7). Money-changers: for a temple tax paid by every male Jew more than nineteen years of age, with a half-shekel coin (Ex 30:11–16), in Syrian currency. See note on Mt 17:24.

2:17 Ps 69:10, changed to future tense to apply to Jesus.

2:19 This saying about the destruction of the temple occurs in various forms (Mt 24:2; 27:40; Mk 13:2; 15:29; Lk 21:6; cf. Acts 6:14). Mt 26:61 has: "I can destroy the temple of God..."; see note there. In Mk 14:58, there is a metaphorical contrast with a new temple: "I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." Here it is symbolic of Jesus' resurrection and the resulting community (see Jn 2:21 and Rev 21:2). In three days: an Old Testament expression for a short, indefinite period of time; cf. Hos 6:2.

2:20 Forty-six years: based on references in Josephus (Jewish Wars 1:401; Antiquities 15:380), possibly the spring of A.D. 28. Cf. note on Lk 3:1.

Reference to Old Testament Prophecy

Psalms 69:10

Because zeal for your house has consumed me,
I am scorned by those who scorn you.

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

II. JESUS AND THE TEMPLE

583 Like the prophets before him Jesus expressed the deepest respect for the Temple in Jerusalem. It was in the Temple that Joseph and Mary presented him forty days after his birth. At the age of twelve he decided to remain in the Temple to remind his parents that he must be about his Father's business. He went there each year during his hidden life at least for Passover. His public ministry itself was patterned by his pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great Jewish feasts.

584 Jesus went up to the Temple as the privileged place of encounter with God. For him, the Temple was the dwelling of his Father, a house of prayer, and he was angered that its outer court had become a place of commerce. He drove merchants out of it because of jealous love for his Father: "You shall not make my Father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'" After his Resurrection his apostles retained their reverence for the Temple.

585 On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain "one stone upon another". By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover. But this prophecy would be distorted in its telling by false witnesses during his interrogation at the high priest's house, and would be thrown back at him as an insult when he was nailed to the cross. Far from having been hostile to the Temple, where he gave the essential part of his teaching, Jesus was willing to pay the Temple-tax, associating with him Peter, whom he had just made the foundation of his future Church. He even identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God's definitive dwelling-place among men. Therefore his being put to bodily death presaged the destruction of the Temple, which would manifest the dawning of a new age in the history of salvation: "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father."

Group Intercessions:

[Ask each participant if they have any specific prayer intentions that they would like the group to pray for. It may be a good idea to start a group prayer intention book and the leader can read from it each week and add new requests as needed.]

Closing Prayer:

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in your light and walk in your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.