

Sunday 3rd (B) of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn 2,13-25*): Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers seated there. 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, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of scripture, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 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.

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

«Stop making my Father's house a marketplace»

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Today, when Easter is approaching, some unusual event has happened at the Temple. Jesus has driven the merchants and their animals out of the Temple court, has knocked over the tables of the money-changers and has ordered the people selling doves “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace.” (Jn 2:16). And while the oxen and the sheep were stampeding across the esplanade, the disciples discovered a new aspect of Jesus' soul: the zeal for his Father's House, the zeal for God's Temple.

The Temple of God becoming a market place! What an atrocity! They probably started with a few animals, a shepherd trying to sell some sheep, or an old woman who wanted to make a few coins by selling doves... and the ball kept growing and growing. Stop, cried the Song of Songs' author: “Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that damage the vineyards; for our vineyards are in bloom!” (Song 2:15). But here, nobody could care less! The Temple esplanade was like a market on market day.

—I am a temple of God, too. If I do not watch, these little foxes, pride, sloth, gluttony, envy, avarice, forms of disguise selfishness... will sneak in and damage everything. This is why the Lord warns us: “What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’” (Mk 13:37).

Watch!, so that apathy does not invade our conscience: “Being incapable of acknowledging guilt is the most dangerous form of spiritually arrested development one can imagine, because this in particular makes people incapable of improvement” (Benedict XVI).

Stay vigilant? —I try to every night... Did I offend someone? Are my intentions righteous? Am I willing to fulfill always and in everything God's will? Have I assumed some practice that may displease our Lord? But, late at night I am too tired and sleepy to think...

—Jesus, you know me well, you know quite well what each man's mind is like, so make me realize my own faults, give me strength and a little bit of that zeal of yours so that I can also drive out from the temple all that might appear to separate me from you.