

English

3rd Sunday of Lent B

First Reading Exodus 20:1-3.7-8.12-17

God spoke all these words. He said, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no gods except me.

You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it. Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his."

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Gospel John 2:13-25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, "Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market." Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, "What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary; are you going to raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said. During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

Meditation

In today's gospel, Jesus chases the merchants and the money-changers from the temple. He throws their money on the ground, drives out the animals, turns over their tables. "Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" Why this destructive violence? John gives us the key in a psalm verse: "Zeal for your house consumes me" (Ps 69:10). Jesus' anger expresses this zeal. He cannot bear to see the house where God meets his people diverted from its purpose. The religious leaders are indignant. A simple layman claims to put the sanctuary in order. What does he think he is doing?

If God has sent him, let him prove it by a miracle! "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." This saying was incomprehensible at the time, but John explains it for his Christian readers.

This "temple" is the body of Jesus. His adversaries will destroy it, but three days later, the resurrection will establish it as the definitive dwelling of God's presence. An hour after the cleansing, the merchants had probably resumed business in the temple. However, we cannot deny the repercussions of Jesus' prophetic gesture. In the light of Easter, this incident reveals the place of meeting between God and humanity to be the person of the Risen One.