



3rd Sunday in Lent (Year B)



John 2: 13-25

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

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

After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this: and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about human nature, for he himself knew what was within the human person.

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Reflection:

Situated on a hill, the temple had outgrown its present location. Many of the “markets” that supplied temple worshippers with animals for sacrifice had begun to infringe on the outer courtyards. The temple is symbolic of our own lives. There is only so much time and only a certain amount of energy. Our relationship with God and those we love are threatened by all kinds of secondary activities and pursuits. We may want to ask ourselves: “What kind of house cleaning needs to take place in my life?”



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

- "What is most important in our life as family?"
- "What are we doing to make more room/time for these things?"



Family Night (a bedtime story):

"Let's have a family night," Mom once suggested while the kids were eating breakfast and Dad was sitting down with his first coffee of the day. "We can begin with a nice supper and finish with a series of games."

"Great idea, Mom", Toby added. "Sally is celebrating a birthday on Tuesday. We can do it then."

"I was hoping to invite a few friends," Sally answered. "It will have to be some other day."

"How about Friday?", Dad suggested. "The school week will be over, and the kids can sleep in all day."

"No, that won't work," Mom said. "Friday's the beginning of Toby's hockey tournament; he'll be in and out all weekend."

"Monday I've got dance and Thursday I've got gymnastics."

"Monday I've got scouts and Thursday I've got Karate."

"That leaves Wednesday," Mom concluded, "after I pick the kids up from Catechism."

"Sorry to burst your bubble," Dad chimed in. "But I've got a dinner meeting after work. I'll be late in coming home."

"Would Sunday evening work?" Mom asked, afraid of yet another setback.

Dad looked crushed.

"What's wrong honey? You don't look too happy."

"It's March Madness in College Basketball. It only happens once a year."

"Let's look at another week," Mom suggested. "Does anyone have any suggestions?"

"Two weeks Friday," someone offered.

"No, two weeks Tuesday", another one suggested.

"I'm free three weeks Saturday," a third voice chimed in.

"Are we all that busy?" Mom interrupted. "That we don't even have time for one another? Let's take today to think about it. I am sure we'll be able to find some time when we look at it again tomorrow."

Discussion Question:

Does it ever feel like you don't have time for one another?

Why do you think that is?

Plan a family night!

(You may want to have one every week / every second week / every month)



The Lost Coin (a bedtime story):

"Sally, help me find the coin Dylan gave me? It was sitting on my desk and now it's gone. Maybe it fell off and got mixed up with the laundry. Maybe it got lost among all the toys."

"It could be anywhere," Sally responded. "Your room is such a mess."

"It might be a good time to do some cleaning," Dad poked his head inside. "With all the stuff you have all over, it's a lucky thing we haven't lost you as well."

"Let's begin with his clothes in drawers," Mom suggested, taking charge of some socks on the floor. "Clean or dirty, I don't know the difference. Why do you have to live in a sty?"

"I have so much I don't know where to put it. I have so much, it all falls out."

"We'll start with the top drawer and fold your underwear. We'll go to the next and roll up your socks. Drawer by drawer we'll fold all your clothing, checking for anything that might not belong."

"Too many shirts, I don't know where to put them. Too many shirts, the drawer will not close. Too many shirts, no wonder they fall out. Too many shirts I never wear at all."

"Let's give some away, the good and the best. Let's give some away, the ones that don't fit you. I am sure that someone would be very impressed."

"Now for the toys, the small Lego pieces. Now for the toys, the trucks and the cars. Now for the stuffies, the bears and the bunnies. Now for the games, their pieces and all."

"There is no room for all in my closet. There is no room, my room is too small. There is no room for all of these boxes. There is no room in my closet at all."

"Now for the books, the puzzles and X-box. Now for the homework you brought home from school. Now for your bedding, your pillows and PJ's. Now for the popcorn all scattered around."

"Let's get a dump truck," Sally suggested. "Let's get a dump truck and cart it away. Let's get a dump truck and throw out dear Toby. Let's get a dump truck and cart him away."

'Where is my coin, now that we're finished? Where is my coin, I don't see it at all? Where is my coin, we did all this looking; cleaning my room, we didn't find it at all.'

“Look in your pocket,” Mom finally suggested. “Look in your pocket, it was there all along. Look in your pocket, below all the wrappers. There is your coin, all snuggled and fine.”

Discussion Question:

- What are the signs that you have too much stuff?
- What could you do about it?



Family Project: Do some closet cleaning

Bring good used clothes or toys to a thrift shop or have a garage sale and give the proceeds to the poor.

Time for Prayer:

The cleaning of the Temple has applications on busy agendas and cluttered closets, but also on our life of prayer. Lent is a wonderful time for housecleaning, not only of our physical spaces and day-timers, but our spiritual lives as well. The Jews had a wonderful understanding of their relationship with God. When it came to their offerings, their first fruits were always brought to God.

This is a wonderful way of approaching our spiritual lives. So often, we bring God what is left over of our day or what we have to spare. There are many days when nothing is given, there is no time left at all. Many past saints got up a few minutes early, before they did anything at all. Maybe we need to look towards the beginning of our day. Though the rest of the day may still need looking at, starting with him makes all the difference.



ffering our First Fruits to God - A Morning Offering:

Lord Jesus,
at the beginning of this day,
before anything else I do,
I offer you my heart
in praise and true thanksgiving.
I offer you my words,
my thoughts and all I do,
and unite them to your love,
so wonderfully revealed to us,
in Word, and Deed, and Sacrament,
perfected on the cross.

More daily suggestions for Lent:

(One item is picked each day. Add another link to your Easter garland that stretches across your room.)

- Make an effort to say “thank you”.
- Fast from complaining.
- Read the story of the Call of the First Four Disciples (Mark 1: 16-20).
- Eat only what you need.
- Learn to pray the Rosary.
- Draw one of the Stations of the Cross.
- Read Psalm 150.
- Offer to set the table.
- Talk to someone who needs a friend.
- Give someone else your place in line / your turn at a game.
- Pray while holding the cross in your hand for a few minutes.
- Prepare yourself for confession.