

# Third Sunday of Lent

## Anger in the temple

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, 'My father's house is a house of prayer.' So when he came to the temple in Jerusalem and saw how people had pushed God to one side and allowed money and business to become more important, he was very angry.

### SIGN OF THE CROSS

### LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and sing the Candle Song together.

### SORRY

Let us close our eyes and speak quietly to Jesus, asking his forgiveness for any mistakes we have made or things we have done wrong. (Allow a few moments for quiet reflection.)

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4: *Praise the Lord*

### GOSPEL (cf John 2:13-22)

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover. He found the temple in Jerusalem full of people selling animals, and amongst them sat the money changers. He was very angry and overturned the tables of the money changers, scattering their coins everywhere.

Angrily he chased the animals and the merchants out of the temple shouting at them, 'Take all of these things away and stop making my father's house into a market place!'

The temple priests tried to stop Jesus and asked, 'What right do you have to act like this?'

Jesus answered, 'Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.'

'This temple took forty six years to build! How could you rebuild it in three days?' they exclaimed.

The temple which Jesus spoke of was his own body, and after his resurrection from the dead, his disciples would understand what Jesus had said that day.

### DISCUSSION

Why did the Jewish people go to the temple? – They gathered there to pray and to offer sacrifices in God's honour.

What did Jesus find in the Temple?

Why do you think that the money changers, and the animals were there? – The animals were sold to those who wished to offer them as

sacrifices to God. Ordinary money with a picture of Caesar on it could not be used in the temple. Instead special temple coins were used. To buy animals, and to pay the temple tax, the 'money changers' job was to exchange the ordinary coins for the temple coins.

Why was Jesus so angry? – His father's house had become a market place, filled with buying and selling, instead of being a place of prayer and respect.

What did Jesus say he could do, which surprised the people who believed that he was mad? – Jesus told them that if the temple was destroyed, he could rebuild it in three days. They thought that he spoke of the temple itself, which had taken forty six years to build. Jesus meant the 'temple' of his own body, which would be destroyed by death on the cross but would be raised to life again after three days.

How should we act in the house of God? The house of God is a place of prayer where we can be close to God in a special way. When we are in someone else's home we are well behaved. Remember our manners, so too we should remember God's house when we go to church.

### ACTIVITY

On a large sheet of paper, draw a background. Photocopy the animal pictures enough times so that they can be used to make a busy temple scene. Add the anger of Jesus.

### CREED

### CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray for the family which has gathered here today in God's house to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection.

Thinking ahead. (see discussion points for the Fifth Sunday of Lent)

Either: Sprinkle some cress seeds onto damp cotton wool or kitchen roll. Plant the seeds in a light place and keep damp. Tiny shoots will soon appear. Remove some of the dry seeds to show the difference.

or: Soak some broad beans in water for 24 hours. Put about 2.5cm (1inch) of damp paper in a jam jar and line it with damp paper roll. Put the beans between the paper about half way down. Place in a light place and watch them grow. The shoots begin to appear.