

**Readings Exodus 20: 1-17; Corinthians 1: 22-25; John 2: 13-25**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **Cleansing of the Temple**

John places this event, right at the beginning of Jesus Ministry, so a dramatic and fundamentally important sign that He offers. Whilst underlining the end of the former way of worship, Jesus' words also have a fundamental resurrection message, a great message of hope to start His public life! We are still living the Covenant of Sinai, as a sign of this special relationship God has created with His People in Exodus. Paul emphasises the reality of the crucified Jesus, but as a sign of wisdom and the power of God. Sacrificial worship is replaced by spiritual worship, with a Universalist emphasis, which has been lost from the public prayer in the Temple.

We see an angry Jesus, an unusual image in the Gospels, but we must not dismiss it as an aberration – we see another side to Him, apart from the gentle! He can be strong and assertive too! Anger is another feeling that we have and as such it is neither good nor evil in itself, it is how it is managed which creates the moral issue. It is never wrong just to be angry: it is how we are at that moment. Anger can of course lead us astray, if we let it – but it can also spur us into action! We can rectify something which is wrong or unjust! It can also express our love too!

We need to look at what makes us angry – there is a saying about our being able to assess the size of our soul by the size of that which gets us angry. Very often we are motivated by self-interest or petty things, no matter how marginally. Do we get worked up when it is the interests of another person which are at stake?

Jesus only gets angry when it concerns His love of God or neighbour. Certainly He condemned the commercialisation of the Temple, which was so visible – but He goes deeper than that: He is protesting at the fact that Israel has failed in its mission to the world, by becoming too closed in mind, heart and life. God's House is a House of Prayer for ALL NATIONS!! Salvation is for ALL PEOPLES!!

Jesus is by-passing the Jewish way of public prayer and worship and going for a spiritual way of doing things, which goes way beyond fulfilling rituals and making offerings to God: He is demanding the worship of all that we are and who we are – He is inviting us to this Resurrection attitude: that we are ALREADY living the Lord's Risen Life HERE and NOW! He is asking for our all!! He is not asking us about what we have kept of the Commandments but how we have lived them in our daily lives. We need to reflect and give time to this consideration as we journey through Lent, so that Easter will indeed be a rising to new life!

These are words written over the door of a church: "Lord, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship. Narrow enough to shut out envy, pride and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, or to straying feet. Make this a house of prayer and a gateway to your Kingdom!"