

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God who knows all things,
you made us your children
in the waters of our baptism.
Keep us faithful to you
by obeying your Son, Jesus,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

We live in a world broken by self-sufficiency and material greed.

Our first reading, the Ten Commandments, calls us to a just law which recognizes our dependence on God and the rights of our neighbor. The Gospel presents a seemingly harsh Jesus. In the sacred temple, Jesus lashes out against greed and selfishness, focuses our lives on God and the things of God, and reveals himself as the true "temple." Jesus was harsh with those who insisted on the letter of the Law, but did not live its meaning. Our hope for salvation is not found in either doggedly following the Law (self-sufficiency) or in material wealth (greed) but in the Resurrection of Christ.

FIRST READING: *Exodus 20:1-4a, 7-8, 12-17.*

This is a reading from the book of Exodus.

God said:

I am your God.
I brought you away
from the country of Egypt
and freed you from slavery.

Therefore:

You shall not believe in any other God
but me.

You shall not worship images of false gods
or anything that has been made.

You shall not say the name of God
in a way that is not holy.

Remember to keep the Sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not be unfaithful to your wife
or husband.

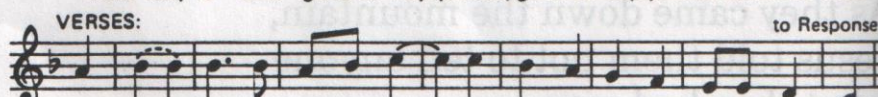
You shall not steal.

You shall not lie about your neighbor.

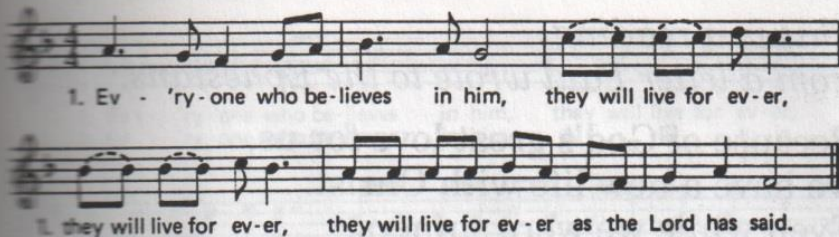
You shall not be jealous
about anything your neighbor owns."

This is the Word of God.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 19*



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *John 2:13-16, 18-21*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem
to celebrate the feast of the Passover.

Inside the temple,
he saw people selling cattle
and sheep and pigeons.

And there were others changing money
for the people.

Jesus made a long whip
and chased the cattle and the sheep
out of the temple.

He also knocked over the money tables,
spilling the coins on the ground.

He said to those who were selling pigeons,

“Get them out of here!

Stop using God’s house as a marketplace!”

The Jews who were there, said to Jesus,

“What gives you the right to do this?

What sign can you give us?”

Jesus answered them,

“Tear down this temple,
and I will raise it up in three days!”

The Jews said,

“It took us forty-six years
to build this temple!

And you think you can raise it up
in three days?”

But the temple Jesus was talking about
was his body.

And later when he was raised from the dead,
his disciples remembered that he said this
and they believed in him.

This is the Good News of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

This Gospel text is a difficult one for children. To be sure, it is action packed and will no doubt have a high interest level! But the meaning of the action — that is, Jesus, the new temple, replaces the worship of the old dispensation in the temple in Jerusalem — is not a theme easily grasped by small children who, naturally, have a limited concept of historical time. Since we introduced the season of Lent as a special time to think about our lives and try to change our ways, a reflection on the Ten Commandments may serve us well this Sunday. The “law” appears elsewhere in this Cycle but in each case, the Gospel takes priority in the reflections.

After the first reading, ask the children what commandment they recall. As each response is given, ask the children for their reflection on that particular commandment. (Do not be concerned with the order of the commandments.)

For example: You shall not lie about your neighbor. You might explore with them how we are all tempted to blame someone else to avoid taking responsibility (or punishment) for our own actions. For a child, this may mean lying about another child in order to gain friends.

The important point in any reflection of this sort, is that it be appropriate to their age and behavior. For example, there seems little point to dwelling on the seventh commandment which simply is not relevant to them at this time. Or, with regard to “You shall not kill,” children may begin by repeating what they have heard adults say about war or capital punishment. Try to keep it on their level. Can we “kill” others by ignoring them? Does this commandment also tell us to take good care of our bodies so we will stay healthy?

It is important that the children see the Ten Commandments as a positive way we show our love for God and for our neighbor.