

Homily 3rd Sunday Lent B 2021

Jesus was angry, he lost his temper and he used force. Surely that makes him fully human not less human. In a different context: a drug addict seeking to come off drugs will endure the brutal and severe suffering of withdrawal in order to break with the habit and we would applaud him for it. Brutal medical treatment is often needed to force out the poison/cancer that is killing us. Jesus was making an unambiguous statement about the sanctity of the Temple and reminds us that we are temples, too; temples of the Holy Spirit. Lent is the opportunity to allow Jesus to purify us with his compassion and mercy so we can return to being a holy place. Since we are all temples of the Holy Spirit, together we make up the family of God, the Church. Together we become a clear sign of God's presence, love and mercy for all. Moses was told he was standing on holy ground when God spoke to him from the burning bush. Being temples of the Holy Spirit, everywhere we walk the holiness of the ground is made stronger. The divine spirit with which the Creator imbued creation combines powerfully with the Spirit of God dwelling within us.

Jesus wanted to help people not just to do what the law said but to embrace its spirit which is why he summarised it in one word – LOVE! Love of God and love of neighbour. Jesus wanted us to enter into the spirit of the commandments so that they would guide us in all our actions and show how we should or should not treat others. They help us keep God at the centre of our lives. We are wired with the spirit of the commandments which become post-it notes reminding us to keep on track and not to stray. Most of all, Jesus wants us to discover the gift that we are in his sight. Macrina Wiederkehr offers the following thoughts:

There is a gift hidden away in the frail envelope of your being. It is the gift of your brokenness. The mysterious thing about this gift is that God's presence isn't experienced immediately. Sometimes it takes a backward glance: Jacob after his dream cries out, "*Truly, the Lord was in this place and I never knew it.*" Let those words move through your heart now as you stand before life experiences in which the *Indwelling Presence of God* was not felt—those places where you could not feast because the darkness did not appear to be holy darkness.

Lent is a time to honour the mystery of Christ's presence in us and to celebrate his Indwelling Presence. Christ is present in ways we do not know. Let us cherish his presence. Christ offers joy in the midst of our sorrows, love in the midst of our fears, light in the midst of our darkness because we are his temples.