

Third Sunday of Lent Yr B



John 2:13-25

**13** Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, **14** and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. **15** Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over **16** and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' **17**

Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. **18** The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' **19** Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' **20** The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' **21** But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, **22** and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said. **23** During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, **24** but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; **25** he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

Other readings: Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 18 (19) 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

One of the features of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is frequently to be found in Jerusalem. The story about the 'cleansing of the temple' is placed by this evangelist at the start of Jesus' ministry, while in the other gospels it comes as a trigger for Jesus' arrest. The dialogue with the Jews about 'the sanctuary that was his body' is only found in John's gospel.

Jesus comes to bring a new age, a new time, a new form of worship. He is the Word among us. He reveals the way to God. It is not therefore surprising that when Jesus causes disruption in the temple the conversation shifts to the significance of the temple, and to the significance of his coming.

Jesus speaks in terms which are not immediately clear. Later, after his death and resurrection, the full import of his words will be apparent. Just as the temple is soon to be destroyed, so too the body of Jesus will be brought to death. But the future lies in the new life of the resurrection. Despite this enigma the evangelist tells us that many in Jerusalem came to believe in Jesus' name. From the start his words and person attracted those with the courage to see and understand.

*What does the cleansing of the temple symbolise?*

*Is it helpful to see Jesus as the 'new temple'?*

*Let us pray that our Lenten journey will be richly blessed.*

*Let us pray for the Jewish people, our elder brothers and sisters in the faith.*