



**Meditation for the
6th and 7th of March 2021**

3rd Sunday of Lent

The Gospel according to John 2: 13 - 25

As with the Jews of his time, Jesus makes the ritual pilgrimage at Passover: coming up to Jerusalem. At the heart of the holy city is the Temple, and at its centre, the Holy of Holies: the place where God resides. The law of Moses prescribed sacrifices (Leviticus 1 – 7). Remember the presentation of Jesus at the Temple, when Mary and Joseph offered up two turtle-doves; this was why traders were to be found, together with their animals, in the Holy place. In Christ's time the official coin was Roman, and Caesar's image was stamped onto it. It was considered impure by the Jews and you couldn't use it to buy animals for sacrifice. The coin used for sacred duties, the shekel, was available on the Esplanade, from bankers whose takings would vary according to the weight and type of metal used. So both bankers and traders, as well as animals, would have been parked up in the Temple.

Today, what is your Temple? This holy place where God lives? What is to be found parked up in there?

So Jesus loses his temper! "Stop using my Father's house as a market place!" His deep indignation reveals the contrast between his understanding of the Father's love, which is a gift, infinitely free and generous, and the trade put in place by the religious authorities. Jesus doesn't simply stick to passive indignation. He can't agree to a twisted vision of God linked to false practice.

*Today, what makes you indignant?
Is there a difference between your vision of God and the way you practice your faith?
What kind of inner trade can you purify today, with Jesus' help?*

The rest of the story details a breakdown in understanding between Jesus and the Jews. For the Jews the scandal is twofold: first Jesus makes a scene in a sacred place, then he also talks about the Temple as his Father's house; talking of himself as the son, so the Son of God. The Jews want some sign, some justification for his actions and words. Jesus' enigmatic reply doesn't calm them down. Jesus doesn't start to present reasoned arguments. A surprising lesson from the Lord! He opens up the door of faith for us and takes us along a path that isn't bounded by immediate reasoned understanding. Only later will the disciples remember what was written: "Zeal for your House will consume me". And, after his death and resurrection, that Jesus was talking about the Temple of his Body. It's as if we can only truly see aspects of God by looking behind us, reading the journey of our lives.

Today, looking back at the past week, is there an aspect of God that has been revealed to you by some event? Or a word, or the Word?

Are the Jews scandalised? They ask for a sign, and at the end of the passage it is written "many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name". The signs speak for some but not for others... the last verses also reveal a discord: the difference between those believing in him and Jesus who doesn't trust them, because he knows what is in people's hearts.

Today, are there any signs that speak to you? What are they inviting you to?

To end this meditation, take the time to be before God. Tell God simply your indignation, your desire to live from the free gift of his Love. Consider also those things that are like an inner trade, or incomprehension, or discord, lack of faith or trust, and share these things with God very simply. Talk to God as a friend speaks with a friend.

Sr Anne Peyremorte

"If you knew the gift of God!"

After this word of God that we have meditated on, what gift from God have you received for the coming week?

- The place the Father lives
- A real temper!
- An aspect of God
- Signs that speak to you
- Other:

How do you want to reply to the gift?

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