

Third Sunday of Lent

Anger in the temple

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, "My father's house is a house of prayer." So when he came to the temple in Jerusalem and saw how people had pushed God to one side and allowed money and business to become more important, he was very angry.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and sing the Candle Song together.

SORRY

Let us close our eyes and speak quietly to Jesus, asking his forgiveness for any mistakes we have made or things we have done wrong. (Allow a few moments for quiet reflection.)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4.

GOSPEL (JOHN 2:13-22)

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He found the temple in Jerusalem full of people selling animals, and among them sat the money changers. He was very angry and overturned the tables of the money changers, scattering their coins everywhere.

He chased the animals and the merchants out of the temple shouting at them, "Take all of these things away and stop making my father's house into a market place!"

The temple priests tried to stop Jesus and asked, "What right do you have to act like this?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days."

"This temple took forty-six years to build! How could you rebuild it in three days?" they exclaimed. The temple which Jesus spoke of was his own body, and after his resurrection from the dead, his disciples would understand what Jesus had said that day.

DISCUSSION

The Jewish people gathered in the temple to pray and to offer sacrifices in God's honor. What did Jesus find in the temple?

Why do you think that the money changers and the animals were there? The animals were sold to those who wished to offer them as sacrifices to God. Ordinary money with the picture of Caesar on it could not be used in the temple. Instead, special temple coins were used to buy animals and to pay the temple taxes. The money changers' job was to exchange the Roman coins for the temple coins.

Jesus was angry because his father's house had become a market place, filled with people buying and selling, instead of being a place of prayer and respect.

Jesus told the people that if the temple was destroyed, he could rebuild it in three days. They thought that he spoke of the temple itself, which had taken forty-six years to build. But Jesus meant the temple of his own body, which would be destroyed by death on the cross but raised to life again after three days.

The house of God is a place of prayer where we can be close to God in a special way. When we visit someone else's home we are well-behaved and remember our manners, so, too, we should respect God's house when we go to church.

ACTIVITY

On a large sheet of paper, draw a temple background. Copy the animal and stall pictures enough times so that they can be cut out to make a busy temple scene. Add the angry figure of Jesus.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray for the family which has gathered here today in God's house to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection.

THINKING AHEAD

(See discussion for the Fifth Sunday of Lent.)

Sprinkle some seeds onto a piece of damp cotton or paper towel. Put the seeds in a light place and keep them damp. Tiny shoots will soon appear. Keep some of the dry seeds to show the children.

