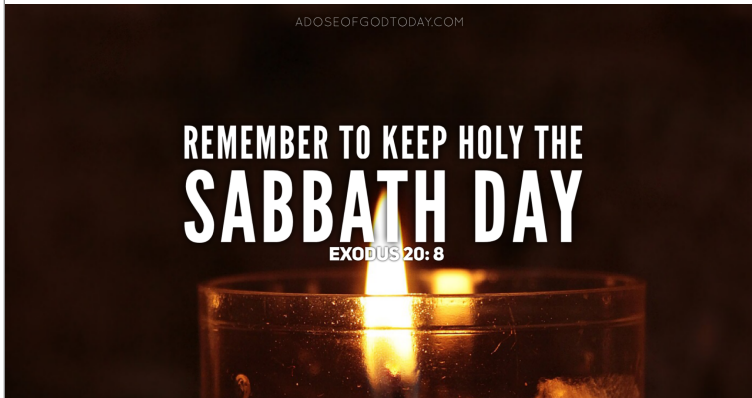


# A DOSE OF GOD TODAY

Eucharist | Prayers | Readings | Reflections



Commenting on today's Gospel, Gerard Deighan writes: "The Lord needs a place, and the Lord needs a day; or rather we do, because we need the Lord."

**[SCRIPTURE IN CHURCH (Jan-Mar 2009 p.65)]**

Today's Gospel is about Jesus cleansing the Temple of vendors, an incident mentioned by all the four Gospel writers: Matthew [21:12-13], Mark [11:15-19], Luke [19:45-48], and John [2:13-25]. John however situates it right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Reading gives us the "Decalogue" or popularly called "The Ten Commandments". The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment reads: "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy." [Ex. 20:8]. Are the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading and the Gospel related?

The "Sabbath" is the "Lord's Day" and we are commanded "to keep it holy"! To keep it *holy* means to set it apart and to consecrate that day and time exclusively for God! Ideally, we are to spend the Lord's Day, differently from the way we spend the other six days of the week! Keeping the Lord's Day, doesn't only mean abstaining from hard work but also actively participating in the worship of the Lord! Keeping the Lord's Day also entails *sacrificing*

*part of our time for the Lord, by doing nothing, but resting!* When the members of the family or the community observe this *day of rest for the Lord*, the family, and the community usually benefit physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially! The family by spending time together can strengthen their relationships and their bonding with each other! So too with the community! Keeping the Lord's Day, gives us the time to re-energize, and to refresh our body, mind, and spirit; after working for the past six days! When we take a rest on the Lord's Day, we follow God's example, Who rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after His work of creation! "And on the seventh day, God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done." [Genesis 2:2]

How is this commandment related to Jesus' violent behaviour in today's Gospel? When Jesus went up to Jerusalem, he discovered that people were "selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables... 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house, a market-place!'" [Jn. 2:14-16]. Why that strong reaction?

Jesus wanted to reclaim the Temple as a *sacred place for God*. Jesus insisted on observing a boundary between *the sacred* and *the secular*! Jesus is not against business trading or with people trying to have a decent livelihood! Those animals being sold there were needed for the prescribed temple sacrifice. The money-changers were needed to change Roman denarii and Attic drachmas into acceptable coins for the offerings. Jesus drove the sellers out because they not only crossed, but also encroached on the "*sacred space of God*" because of greed for money, profit, and selfish convenience!

Jesus was angered by their turning his *Father's house* into a *market-place*, into a commercial center! The boundary between *the sacred* and *the secular* was violated!

As God's people, we need a place for worship, a quiet place where we can have a quiet conversation with our Father in heaven; or take refuge even for a little while, to escape the noise and the rush in a world busy with endless activities and commerce!

Just as we set aside a day *exclusively* for the Lord, so too must we set aside a special, decent, quiet, clean, and beautiful enough place *worthy* of God! Out of respect for that *sacred place of God*, we must observe proper decorum especially in the way we behave and dress! Remember, that when we are in church, to participate in the Eucharist, we are *not* attending a wild a party; or going for an excursion on a beach!

Seeing Jesus' reaction, his disciples "remembered that it was written: 'zeal for your house will consume me.'" [Jn. 2: 17]. Jesus burned with zeal to keep and to reclaim his Father's house as God's sacred place!

The Lord needs a respectable place, where God can interact and bond with God's daughters and sons especially on the *Lord's Sabbath*! How about you? Do you also have that need? Do you have the same *burning zeal* as Jesus had? How conscientiously are you in looking after *God's sacred place*, in remembering, and in keeping holy the Lord's Day?

Do you really believe that: "The Lord needs a place, and the Lord needs a day; or rather we do, because we need the Lord?"

*Fr. Manoling Thomas, CSSR*

## INTRODUCTION

A blessed Sunday, brothers and sisters.

On this Third Sunday of Lent, our liturgy leads us into the life-giving commandments of God. God's commands are not meant to

restrain us or prevent us in living our life fully but rather for us to follow God's ways in order to live our life and our relationships with one another in its fullness and healthy way.

Thus, we express our gratitude to the Lord who remains faithful and loving to us as we sing our entrance song.

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. turn to me and have mercy on me, for i am alone and poor. (Cf. Ps 25 (24): 15-16)*

## THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

### PENITENTIAL ACT

**The GLORIA IN EXCELSIS** (Glory to God in the highest) *is not said.*

## COLLECT

**Let us pray.** *(pause)*

**O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## FIRST READING

**A Reading from the Book of Exodus (Ex 20:1-17)**

In those days, God delivered all these commandments:

"I, the LORD, am your God,  
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
that place of slavery.

You shall not have other gods besides me.  
You shall not carve idols for yourselves  
in the shape of anything in the sky above  
or on the earth below or in the waters  
beneath the earth;  
you shall not bow down before them or  
worship them.

For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God,  
inflicting punishment for their fathers'  
wickedness

on the children of those who hate me,  
down to the third and fourth generation;  
but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth  
generation

on the children of those who love me and  
keep my commandments.

"You shall not take the name of the LORD,  
your God, in vain.

For the LORD will not leave unpunished  
the one who takes his name in vain.

"Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.  
Six days you may labor and do all your work,  
but the seventh day is the sabbath of the  
LORD, your God.

No work may be done then either by you, or  
your son or daughter,

or your male or female slave, or your beast,  
or by the alien who lives with you.

In six days the LORD made the heavens and  
the earth,  
the sea and all that is in them;

but on the seventh day he rested.

That is why the LORD has blessed the  
sabbath day and made it holy.

"Honor your father and your mother,  
that you may have a long life in the land  
which the LORD, your God, is giving you.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your  
neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,  
nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or  
ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

**The word of the Lord.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11**

**LORD, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF  
EVERLASTING LIFE.**

The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the  
soul; The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,  
giving wisdom to the simple. **(R.)**

The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing  
the heart; the command of the LORD is clear,  
enlightening the eye. **(R.)**

The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring  
forever, the ordinances of the LORD are true,  
all of them just. **(R.)**

They are more precious than gold, than a  
heap of purest gold; sweeter also than syrup  
or honey from the comb. **(R.)**

## SECOND READING

### A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1:22-25)

Brothers and sisters:

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

### The word of the Lord.

## Verse Before the Gospel

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)

## GOSPEL READING

### A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (2:13-25)

Jesus Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen,

and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."

His disciples recalled the words of Scripture,

*Zeal for your house will consume me.*

At this the Jews answered and said to him,

"What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews said,

"This temple has been under construction for forty-six years,

and you will raise it up in three days?"

But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

Therefore, when he was raised from the dead,

his disciples remembered that he had said this,

and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover,

many began to believe in his name

when they saw the signs he was doing.

But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all,

and did not need anyone to testify about human nature.

He himself understood it well.

### The Gospel of the Lord.

## Homily

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

**Priest:** God's commands lead us to freedom and to everlasting life and so with confidence let us seek the Father's mercy and that we may grow in our obedience to his will. Let our response be,

**LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR US.**

1. We pray for the Church, that as we celebrate the Year of Missio Ad Gentes, our Shepherds may become more courageous in proclaiming the life-giving word of God to all peoples. Let us pray to the Lord.
2. We pray for our Government Leaders, that the commandments of God may become the light and guidance of their conscience as they make laws and decisions for the public. Let us pray to the Lord.
3. We pray for the business sector of our society, that they may not only think and

achieve what is profitable and beneficial to them but also do what is just and right for all. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. We pray for all of us present today, that as we keep this Sunday holy, we may also receive the fullness of grace of God from this Eucharist. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. We pray for all the faithful departed, that the Lord may receive them in mercy and grant them peace and everlasting joy. Let us pray to the Lord.

**P:** Our Loving Father, since the very beginning, you have been with us, guiding and giving us light. Grant us now the grace that we need as we continue in our lenten journey with your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

**Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor.**

**Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Preface of Lent I

**V.** The Lord be with you.

**R.** And with your spirit.

**V.** Lift up your hearts.

**R.** We lift them up to the Lord.

**V.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

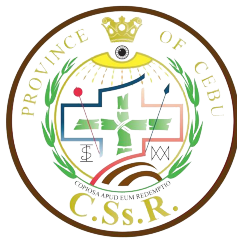
**R.** It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the angels and saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts . . .



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### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise. (Cf. Ps 84 (83): 4-5)

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Let us pray.** *(pause)*

**As as we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion.**

**Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### FINAL BLESSING

*Bow down for the blessing.*

Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbor, they may fulfill the whole of your commands. Through Christ our Lord.

And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✚ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**R. Amen.**

*Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.*