



AMDG
3RD SUNDAY IN LENT
YEAR B
4TH MARCH 2018



Christ, the power and the wisdom of God

OPENING PRAYER

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.

We continue our Lenten journey, and join Jesus this week as he goes up to Jerusalem. Our readings offer us the wisdom of God's law in the commandments, and Jesus's forceful action regarding the true meaning of God's Temple.

The ten commandments in the *First Reading* from Exodus present the Law as a freedom charter – we have been freed from slavery to serve our God.

Psalms 18 (19) is a joyful poem of praise for God's precepts. It links the teaching of the commandments to their personification in Jesus – wisdom, truth and light.

St Paul in the *Second Reading* preaches a crucified Christ. This is an obstacle to some, but for Christ's followers, through his death and resurrection, he is the power and the wisdom of God.

In the *Gospel*, Jesus ejects the buyers and sellers from the Temple and in doing so reveals himself as the true Temple. Like the Temple, he too, will be destroyed in his body, but will rise again.

As we journey with Jesus, may we find in him the true sanctuary, and perhaps the wisdom to know when to disturb the peace.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 18 (19)

R./ You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb.

As I come to my place of prayer, I still my mind and body.

I take up the psalm ... aware that it was also the prayer of Jesus.

I read it slowly several times, taking in the poetry and the images.

What strikes me?

The attributes of God's law – perfect, right, holy, clear, true ...?

Or its active effect – that it revives, gladdens, gives wisdom and light?

Can I see God's law as something steady and freeing?

That it is positive and precious, to be desired?

I speak to the Lord of this.

The response is a line from St John's Gospel.

Jesus is the Word – the message of eternal life.

Can I pray this psalm as it reflects his life and teaching?

I finish slowly, with a prayer of thanks.

GOSPEL: JOHN 2: 13–25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. 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 and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

I take time to settle gently into prayer, becoming aware of being in God's presence.

I read the text slowly a couple of times.

Perhaps I can imagine the scene: the noise of the animals, the smells, the shouting of the traders and the jostling of the crowds.

I watch Jesus.

How do I feel when he reacts with anger, and chaos ensues?

Why is this? I speak to him of my reactions.

What different questions do I ask Jesus, and how does he reply?

I pause and consider the journey ahead of Jesus – how he is willing to suffer and die to be true to his Father.

The true temple is the body of Christ.

What does this mean to me, and how can I be part of it?

'Zeal for your house will devour me' – perhaps, as I gently end my prayer, I can ask for the gift of his Spirit, so that I may work with greater fervour for his kingdom.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

You shall have no gods except me. *First Reading*

You, Lord, have the message of eternal life. *Psalm Response*

Christ, the power and the wisdom of God. *Second Reading*

Stop turning my Father's house into a market. *Gospel*

Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up. *Gospel*

Father, you have taught us to overcome our sins
by prayer, fasting and works of mercy.

When we are discouraged by our weakness,
give us confidence in your love. *Old Opening Prayer*

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further
Exodus 20: 1-17; Ps 18 (19): 8-11; 1Corinthians 1: 22-25; John 2: 13-25*



How does
this image
speak to
me in my
prayer?



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
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Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

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