



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 3 MARCH 2024 – 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

**COLLECT**

Almighty God,  
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Psalm 19**

- 1 The heavens are telling the glory of God ♦  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 2 One day pours out its song to another ♦  
and one night unfolds knowledge to another.
- 3 They have neither speech nor language ♦  
and their voices are not heard,
- 4 Yet their sound has gone out into all lands ♦  
and their words to the ends of the world.
- 5 In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun, ♦  
that comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber  
and rejoices as a champion to run his course.
- 6 It goes forth from the end of the heavens and runs to the very end again, ♦  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; ♦  
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; ♦  
the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; ♦  
the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, ♦  
sweeter also than honey, dripping from the honeycomb.
- 11 By them also is your servant taught ♦  
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can tell how often they offend? ♦  
O cleanse me from my secret faults!
- 13 Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins lest they get dominion over me; ♦  
so shall I be undefiled, and innocent of great offence.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, ♦  
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

## **A Reading from the book of the Exodus, Chapter 20, verses 1-17**

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

For the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from John, chapter 2, verses 13-22.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:***

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord. Whoever follows me has the light of life.

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, chapter 2 verses 13-22.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people 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. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

## *A Reflection from Peter...*

When we hear this Gospel reading, - often referred to as "the cleansing of the temple", - it is tempting to launch into a familiar kind of back and forth about cathedrals charging for entrance, or having their gift shops in the cathedral itself. We can quickly and easily find ourselves in the midst of heated argument! In fact, the Gospel passage has much more subtlety, but first we need a bit more context. Our first reading is even more familiar. It is the ten commandments given to Moses. Here there is a similar temptation: to think that God has spoken; these are the immutable principles that we must follow and then all will be well. In our very complex and troubled times there is something of the same hope: that some clear judgment can sort out the problems and let us get on with life. We are troubled by the stalemate in Ukraine and by the catastrophe in the Middle East – but even when there are attempts to resolve the crises by recourse to law it doesn't seem to work. Rather, it is an opportunity for each side to dig in a bit deeper. The fundamental flaw is to think that reducing problems to abstract factual, practical details will enable us to solve them. The flaw is leaving the person, the personal, out. When Jesus drives the traders and money-changers out of the temple it is not because they have broken trading regulations. It is because they have forgotten God, whose house it is. Jesus goes on to make this even more personal by saying "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up", making a dramatic identification between the way in which the physical temple was a place where people encountered God and Jesus' own human body – the new, shockingly vulnerable, intimate and utterly personal encounter with God. As we continue our Lenten journey we recognise it is an invitation to know ourselves more deeply and to allow ourselves to be more open to the wonderful otherness of those around us – and to God who calls us to Godself.