



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT, CYCLE B

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"...stop making my Father's house a marketplace." John 2:16

Our Lenten Journey began with the first Sunday of Lent, following Jesus into the desert. Then, the second Sunday we transcended with Jesus up to the summit of Mount Tabor where we witnessed His transfiguration before the eyes of Peter, James and John. According to the *Mystical City of God* by Venerable Mary of Jesus of Ágrede (1602–1665), she writes: *"For His Transfiguration He selected Mount Tabor, a high mountain in the center of Galilee, seven miles east of Nazareth."* This Third Sunday in Lent, we turn to the Gospel of John where we journey some 83 miles with Jesus down the mountain to set our path toward the hills of Jerusalem, and into the Temple area.

"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.'" John 2:14-16

Last night I fell asleep meditating on this gospel. In a dream I found myself outside the temple area. Jesus and his disciples had just arrived and were about to enter. We met up, Jesus and I, for a moment in passing. Clothed in a dazzling white gossamer garment, He paused, I looked in his eyes, and the only words I could utter were, *"Thank you, Jesus."* In that moment he looked slightly distracted, for he had set his mind on the destiny laid before him, then he comprehended my intention. For a moment, the zeal in his eyes turned to compassion. He simply touched me on the shoulder, then turned swiftly and continued into the temple area. *"Zeal for your house will consume me."* John 2:17

He entered the temple like a headwind in a storm. Calm in the temple just moments before collided with the headwind. Calm turned into violent turmoil, a maelstrom. In the 10th chapter of Ezekiel we hear the account of punishment coming by fire and Our Lord's glory leaving the temple by cloud. *"Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the threshold of the temple..." (Ezekiel 10:18).* But Our Lord keeps his covenant to his people. In today's gospel he returns. Here we recall the expression, *"Never twice in the same reality."* In other words, evil cannot coexist with the good and holy of the Lord, thus a clashing storm ensues.

Purification of the temple was about to be experienced, as the Jews were to witness. Jesus called down God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Together this Trinity formed a *"chord of three strands... for a cord of three strands is not quickly broken."* Ecclesiastes 4:12 This Trinitarian Whipping Chord drove evil out of the temple.

The words I uttered, *"Thank you Jesus"* are good words to pray and meditate on this week. It really summarizes our Christian purpose, our purpose-driven life, to thank our Lord for calling us to join in his pilgrim journey, the Pilgrim's Way of the Cross. To join his Passion, a passion he freely accepts, for he knows that this Lenten Journey ends well: *"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.

I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living. Psalm 116

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

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

