

## **Lent 3B**

*A man had a dream. He was wandering around in heaven when Jesus came along and let him have a vision of something happening down here on earth. It was a church on a Sunday morning and Mass was being celebrated. The organist was playing away, but he couldn't hear a sound. He could see the congregation singing but again, silence. He watched the priest say the prayers - but, once again, there was no sound. He was puzzled, so he turned to Jesus and asked him why the silence. Jesus replied, 'Well you see, unless people are sincere in their worship, we cannot hear them up here'.*

In the temple precinct which was considered to be holy ground money-changing fiddling of the pilgrims by the temple traders was going on and even tolerated. Jesus was aware of all these abuses and that is why he was livid. In a fit of righteous anger he cleared the temple of these traders. They will have been doing this for years without anyone challenging them. How could they genuinely worship God inside the temple if they were dishonest with people in the Temple grounds? Is there is a dis-connect between our worship of God on Sunday and the stand we take on vital issues affecting our society. Some prominent Christians who work in the public domain often take issue with the Church on pivotal moral issues which plainly contradict the teaching of Christ. They may be worshipping God with their lips but their public stance on these issues tell a different story.

In our secular culture for a lot of people, Sunday, the Lord's Day, is designated as a day of rest but it doesn't seem to be sacred anymore – just another working day. With shops closed, the pandemic may have stopped us in our tracks but will it bring about a permanent change in our consumerist lifestyle where Sunday once more will become a day sacred to the Lord. The traders in the temple grounds had their hearts set on Mammon (money) – the worship of God took a back seat or no seat all for

that matter. No wonder Jesus saw red and set about clearing it much to the ire of the temple authorities. Remember it was the temple priests who had the biggest hand to play in bringing about the unjust death of Jesus.

Another way that my worship of God may be compromised is when I treat the house of God as a 'kind of Sunday bazaar'. Isn't that what Jesus said: 'stop turning my Father's house into a market'. Some people, for instance, are of the opinion that even places like Lourdes are too commercialised. There are not many places these days free of noise or din even in places of worship. Contemplatives tell us that God can only be encountered in the stillness and if we can't find it even in our churches then our worship of God will leave a lot to be desired.

So today we ask the good Lord to clear out from our spiritual temple all those things which makes our worship of Him less than genuine. Only then, will there be a resonance between how we worship here on Earth and how it is received in heaven.