

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
3rd Sunday of Lent
2021—B Cycle



Image found in [ThinkTheology](#)

For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, you will find links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.

Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter's path. Instinct says, "Chase after that link!" Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.

Exception: In the course of these reflections, you may have an opportunity to watch or listen to a relevant song or video.

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

Opening Prayer

(edited for use here)

A Prayer for the Poor and Neglected in Our Midst

Almighty and most merciful God,
I remember before you today
all poor and neglected persons
easy for me to forget:
the homeless, the destitute,
the old, the sick,
and all who have no one to care for them.
Help me to heal those who are broken
in body or spirit
and turn their sorrow into joy.
Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son,
Jesus, who became poor for my sake.
Amen.

Source: [The Mission of St. Clare](#)

Second Sunday of Lent

Exodus 20: 3-17 The Ten Commandments

Psalm 19: 8-11 "The law of the Lord is good, refreshing the soul."

First Corinthians 1: 22-25 “We proclaim Christ crucified.”

John 2: 13-25 “Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”

A Reading from the Book of Exodus (20: 3-17)

“Moses with Tablets”

by [Rembrandt](#) (1659)



“God spoke all these words, ‘I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“Do not have other gods before me.

“Do not make a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God; for the sin of the fathers, when they rebel against me, I punish the sons, the grandsons and the great-grandsons. But I show steadfast love until the thousandth generation for those who love me and keep my commandments.

“Do not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain for Yahweh will not leave unpunished anyone who takes his name in vain.

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you will labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath for Yahweh your God. Do not work that day, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your animals, nor the stranger who is staying with you. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why Yahweh 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 that Yahweh has given you.

“Do not kill.

“Do not commit adultery.

“Do not steal.

“Do not give false witness against your neighbor.

“Do not covet your neighbor’s house.

“Do not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.”

Personal Reflection

Yahweh, the living and only God, speaks through Moses with the authority of one who has liberated Israel from slavery in Egypt. Yahweh now wants to put the freed slaves at his own service in the world. Because Yahweh wants to make them free citizens of a free country, Yahweh imposes fundamental laws without which they will revert, not to bondage in Egypt but to a worse kind of slavery, that of their own making.

— *If I were the homilist this weekend and had to pick one of the 10 Commandments to preach about, which would I choose? Why that one? What would be the major theme of my homily? What tone of voice would I use? Why?*

Without erasing the original commandments, Jesus offered a new set of “do’s.” Examples include, “Love your enemies” (Luke 6:35), “Be footwashers” (John 13:14), and “Do good to those who hate you” (Luke 26:27). In addition, Jesus often embedded his moral code in parable stories, as in Matthew 25, the final judgment.

— *Why did Jesus use stories about real life human interactions instead of saying simply, “Don’t do _____”?*

— *In my own family experience, which “style” (do vs. do not) has proved more effective in guiding human behavior and relationships?*

Responsorial Psalm 19 (8-11)

Praise of God, creator and lawgiver

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The law of Yahweh is perfect:
it gives life to the soul.

The word of Yahweh is trustworthy:
it gives wisdom to the simple.

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The precepts of Yahweh are right:
they give joy to the heart.

The commandments of Yahweh are clear:
they enlighten the eyes.

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The fear of Yahweh is pure,
it endures forever;
the judgments of Yahweh are true,
all of them just and right.

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

(Your law is) more precious than gold—
the pure gold of a jeweler,
much sweeter than honey
which drops from the honeycomb.

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

Personal Reflection

By nature, humans (from childhood to old age) don’t like to be told what they *can* or *cannot* do. The psalmist’s worldview gives us a glimpse of the goodness and

generosity of our God and how we need to open ourselves to spiritual guidance. The writer considers the “do’s” and “don’ts” of the original ten commandments in a positive light: “The law of Yahweh is perfect: it gives life to the soul.”

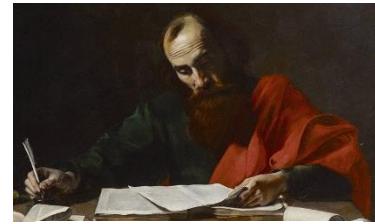
— *How open am I to receiving advice—from God or anyone else—about the way I live my life and make moral decisions?*

— *What does my answer to the above question tell me about myself in relationship to my creator?*

From the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1: 22-25)

“The Jews ask for miracles and the Greeks for a higher knowledge, while we proclaim a crucified Messiah. For the Jews, what a great scandal! And for the Greeks, what nonsense!

“But he is Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, for those called by God among both Jews and Greeks. In reality, the ‘foolishness’ of God is wiser than humans, and the ‘weakness’ of God is stronger than humans.”



“St. Paul,” attributed to Valentin de Boulogne (17th c.)

Personal Reflection

Evangelization in the 21st c. shows signs of being a greater challenge than ever. The Christian message of peace, love, and service to *all* can easily get lost in a world dominated by the counter-messages delivered by well-funded media. We need to count on the grace of God because most of us are shy and without titles of prestige. Speaking up to remind our communities of the poverty of Jesus may bring criticism and rejection by those comfortably well off in the world.

Lots of “wisdom” in this brief passage from Romans.

— *How do I sort out for my own self “godly” wisdom from the kind of “human” wisdom (“foolishness”) St. Paul refers to?*

— *As I look around the world today (within and outside my own faith community), where do I find sources of authentic (godly) wisdom?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (2: 13-25)

(Taken from [The Message](#), Rev. [Eugene Peterson](#)’s modern English translation of the entire Bible, Catholic Edition)

by Salvator Rosa (17th c.)



“When the Passover Feast, celebrated each spring by the Jews, was about to take place, Jesus traveled up to Jerusalem. He found the Temple teeming with people selling cattle and sheep and doves. The loan sharks were also there in full strength.

“Jesus put together a whip out of strips of leather and chased them out of the Temple, stampeding the sheep and cattle, upending the tables of the loan sharks, spilling coins left and right. He told the dove merchants, ‘Get your things out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a shopping mall!

“That’s when his disciples remembered the Scripture, ‘Zeal for your house consumes me.’

“But the Jews were upset. ‘What credentials can you present to justify this?’

“Jesus answered, ‘Tear down this Temple and in three days I’ll put it back together.’

“They were indignant: ‘It took forty-six years to build this Temple, and you’re going to rebuild it in three days?’

“But Jesus was talking about his body as the Temple. Later, after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this. They then put two and two together and believed both what was written in Scripture and what Jesus had said.

“During the time he was in Jerusalem, those days of the Passover Feast, many people noticed the signs he was displaying and, seeing they pointed straight to God, entrusted their lives to him. But Jesus didn’t entrust his life to them. He knew them inside and out, knew how untrustworthy they were. He didn’t need any help in seeing right through them.”

Personal Reflection

In this gospel passage, Jesus drives the profiteering vendors out of the Temple, which he calls his “Father’s house.” Because our parish, like most others, depends on sales of “this and that” to support our various good works and ministries, some “selling” goes on outside on weekends (except in these Covid times).

— *How do I understand Jesus’ anger and violent reaction?*

Could this be the one thing in his life I should not try to emulate? Explain.

— *How likely is it that Jesus regretted some of his actions that day, after taking time to cool down?*

— *What similarities and differences do I see between parish-sponsored (or approved) activities and the kind of commerce that aroused Jesus’ wrath?*

The Week Ahead

Jesus’ actions, with regard to the buying and selling in the Jerusalem Temple, call our attention to policies within my own parish.

— *In my opinion, what kind of sales might Jesus consider in harmony with his standard? What kind of merchandising should not take place inside or outside my parish church?*

Journaling Prompts

— *What personal message or inspiration did I take away from today’s Scriptures? How will this insight help me face my challenges during the coming week?*

— *Based on this Sunday's readings, what does God ask me to do this week regarding (1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and (2) my life as Christ's emissary, charged with bringing his values and grace to the people I interact with—at a safe distance, perhaps via social media?*

— *Who, especially, needs to get a call, letter, email, or text message expressing my love and offering a moment of laughter and personal concern? Why do I hesitate to make that move?*

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings regarding the above suggestions and events occurring in your life and in our country.

For Inspirational Viewing/Listening

Video:

[Jesus drives out the money changers](#) (reenactment, 2 min.)

[Old Testament Background for Jesus Cleansing the Temple](#) by [Chad Bird](#)

(8 min.) Scripture scholar Chad Bird cites the Hebrew Prophets as helpful background for the “cleansing.” For more background on Bird, visit [1517.org](#).

Music:

[“Start Right Here”](#) by [Casting Crowns](#)

A powerful song about our individual responsibility for changing the world for the better.

[“Go to Dark Gethsemane”](#) from [Sacred Song](#) (chorale, 4. Min)

A haunting melody emphasizing the suffering of Jesus in the garden and during his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. The composer is unknown. Poet [James Montgomery](#) (1771-1854) wrote the lyrics. It was first published in the *Selection of Psalms and Hymns* (1820) edited by Thomas Cotterill (1779-1823).

Preview of Next Week's Scriptures

Fourth Sunday of Lent

2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23 “Early and often did the Lord . . . send messengers to (the Jewish people).”

Psalm 137: 1-6 “By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept. . . .”

Ephesians 2: 4-10 “By grace you have been saved through faith.”

John 3: 14-21 “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes might not perish.”

Closing Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

A Prayer for Humble Obedience

Jesus, our Great Redeemer,
when you came into our flesh
to take our place upon the cross,
you did so not to be served but to serve.
Help me to love in this perfect way.
Take my heart and cleanse it.
Make it completely new.
Mold me into a humble servant
of your righteousness.
I pray this in your name.
Amen.

Source: [Connect Us Fund](#)

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words](#))