

1 Maccabees 4: 36-37 52-59.

Luke 19: 45-48

Today the scripture readings reflect very much on the praise of God and on the House of God, the Temple. In the Reading the Maccabees have successfully revolted against the Persians and have rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, the most holy of places and centre of the Jewish people. Their leader, Johnathan, was now determined to restore it in a way that was appropriate to the Law handed down from Moses and for the Glory and praise of God. Not only was the temple adorned with the finest gold. For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering holocausts, communion sacrifices and thanksgiving. These, eight days of celebration were to be repeated yearly with similar rejoicing and gladness. Such was the importance of the building in honour and for the presence of God.

It was probably unsurprising therefore that, when Jesus came to worship at the Temple, he was rightly outraged. “According to scripture, MY House will be a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a robber’s den.” He further angered the scribes, pharisees and leading citizens by his presence teaching in the Temple each day and the fact that the people hung on his every word.

Note the previous emphasis on the word, MY. Ultimately Jesus was to be understood as himself being “God’s Temple.” That as God made man, he was, and is, to be accorded the greatest praise and honour, the focus of prayer and worship.

As the Psalm proclaims, “We praise your glorious name, O Lord.”