

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Exodus 20:1-7 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

John 2:13-25

HOMILY

Of late a few families have moved house in our parish. You just have to talk to them to get a glimpse of how traumatic it is to move house.

Psychologists tell us that, apart from the death of a loved one, perhaps the most traumatic experience a person can have is that of moving house.

But there is one benefit from the traumatic experience moving house: the benefit of getting rid of so much junk.

Today we see Jesus is head on with the accumulated junk that corrupted the Temple. What he is doing here is not merely the ruthless removal of the unwanted items; it is not just the stoppage of the wrong practice. This is a prophetic and symbolic act: Jesus is calling all the peoples of the earth to worship God "*in spirit and in truth*" as he later tells us later in the gospel. The Temple authorities are angry with this act of Jesus because they saw it as the end of something great. Here is a point for reflection: Do you focus on moving as the start of something more wonderful or as the end of something great?

For Jesus the cleansing of the Temple was the start for something more wonderful. Those money changers in the temple had forgotten the value of the temple. Jesus was irritated by the lack of respect the people were showing in the Temple. This was a sacred place where God in a particular way was present. Commercial trading was misplaced and unfitting in such a place. Jesus knew that when money creeps in, it tends to take over.

This becomes a constant challenge to people managing places of pilgrimage around the world. Of course, there was nothing new about the buying and the selling that was taking place in the Temple. It had been going on for generations. But because practices are long-established does not mean they should continue to be tolerated

REFLECTION

Is there a sense in which it is true to say that We have lost the value our house of Prayer at St Joseph's? Is there anything we have forgotten about how to worship? Is there any way we have to let Jesus cleanse us, as he cleansed the Temple?

Taking it on a personal level, St Paul asks, '*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?*' What needs cleansing in me so that I can fittingly house the Spirit of God?