

3rd Sunday of Lent
March 15, 2009

In today's Gospel passage John interweaves his story of Jesus with comments about new insight achieved by the disciples as they remember that story in the light of the resurrection. The resurrection changes everything.

The incident of Jesus driving the merchants and the money-changers from the temple, at the time it occurred, seemed to be about sacred space, and not bringing the corruption of the market place into the arena of prayer and worship. The disciples saw it as a radical (and dangerous) symbolic action on Jesus' part, putting Him in the company of the prophets who challenged the thinking and quality of worship in their own times. Many people who hear the story today would interpret it in the same way.

But in light of the resurrection the disciples see a whole new dimension to Jesus' words. When the religious leaders challenge Jesus, and demand that He show a sign to validate that He is a true prophet, He challenges them as well. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

With hindsight the disciples realize that the temple Jesus spoke of was His own Body. It was in Jesus that God was worshipped purely, without corruption and without self-interest. All other worship, even the worship in the great temple of Jerusalem, fell short of that purity and completeness. When the Body of Jesus was destroyed on the cross, it was raised up in three days. This sign shows the disciples that, not only was Jesus a true prophet, but that His Resurrected Body has replaced all other sacred spaces as the locus of true worship. In the Risen Lord Jesus God is perfectly worshipped and adored. Only by our union with Jesus can we hope to offer a fitting sacrifice to our God. In the Eucharist He draws us into His total giving of Himself to the Father.

God bless you.

Fr. Pat