



Let Us Keep God's Temple Holy

Today's Gospel passage reminds us that Jesus Christ is God's most holy temple. It also reminds us of the sacredness not only of all places of worship but also of every human being, especially those who have been baptized. We are God's temples because He has imprinted in us His most sacred image in creation, and has consecrated us for His service at our baptism.

We desecrate ourselves whenever we commit sin. And we desecrate others when we fail to respect their dignity or lead them to commit sin. When this happens, Jesus becomes even more indignant than when he chased the traders from the Temple of Jerusalem.

In this Eucharist let us renew our commitment to keep all of God's temples holy in every way and at all times.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

Greeting

P –Blessed be God who made us His holy temples at our baptism. May His grace and peace be with you all!

All –**And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –My dear brothers and sisters, let us renew our awareness that when we sin, we profane the holiness of God's presence in ourselves and in others. *(Pause)*

P –For the times we have behaved disrespectfully in

our church or received the Eucharist not properly disposed, Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –For the times we have failed to appreciate the sacredness of our persons, Christ, have mercy!

All –**Christ, have mercy!**

P –For the times we have not respected the dignity and rights of our neighbor, Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life!

All –**Amen!**

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up

by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All –**Amen!**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading *Ex 20:1-3.7-8. 12-17*

The Ten Commandments enshrine values and duties which are valid not only for the Jews but also for all human beings and for ever.

R – A proclamation from the Book of Exodus

In those days, God delivered all these commandments: "I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery.

You shall not have other gods besides me.

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the one who takes his name in vain.

Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm Ps 19

R —Lord, you have the words of everlasting life!

R. M. Velez

Lord, you have the words of
e-ver-las-ting life!

* The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul; the decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple. R.

* The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye. R.

* The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true, all of them just. R.

* They are more precious than gold, than a heap of purest gold; sweeter also than syrup or honey from the comb. R.

2nd Reading 1 Cor 1:22-25

Preaching a crucified Messiah has always seemed a vain enterprise. Yet, the fact remains that it is through the Cross of Christ that the all-wise God has redeemed the world. Such is St. Paul's forceful reminder today.

R — A proclamation from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom. But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Verse before the Gospel

All—(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)

Gospel Jn 2:13-25

The glory and purity of God's Temple was of paramount importance to Jesus. And he bravely upheld this principle even if his driving the traders out of the Temple area set him on a collision course with the Jewish authorities.

P —The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P —A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to John

All—Glory to you, O Lord!

Since the *Passover* of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the *temple* area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?"

But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of *Passover*, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

The Gospel of the Lord!

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GLOSSARY: • *Passover*: One of the three major Jewish festivals. It lasts seven days and is celebrated to commemorate the Israelites' miraculous liberation from the slavery of Egypt, and the sparing of their first-born male children. The highlight of the festival is the slaughtering of the *Passover* lamb and the sacrificial meal during which the members of each family or group eat the *Passover* lamb with bitter herbs. • *Temple*: The most sacred building in Israel, where the Jews gathered to worship God. The first temple was planned by David but constructed by Solomon. It was destroyed in 587 B.C. The one existing at the time of Jesus had been rebuilt by Herod. It was more grandiose than the original one, and was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene Creed)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P —Gathered together in the house of God to celebrate the most sacred act of worship, let us present our petitions for the needs and intentions of all mankind as we say:

All—**Lord, graciously hear us!**

C —That the people of God all over the world may always offer the Eucharistic sacrifice with undefiled hearts, let us pray! *R.*

C —That all mankind may treasure the values enshrined in the

Ten Commandments and live by them, in perfect love for God and neighbor, let us pray! *R.*

C —That the legislators may be guided by the wisdom of God's Law in formulating the laws of every civil society, let us pray! *R.*

C —That all human beings may be respected in their basic rights and never be subjected to humiliating treatment or conditions, let us pray! *R.*

C —That all of us may treasure the sacredness of our own persons as well as that of others, and never defile it through sinful actions, let us pray! *R.*

C —Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)
Let us pray! *R.*

P —Lord of all holiness, You want to dwell in our hearts as in a most precious temple. Renew in us the awareness of Your sanctifying presence, cleanse us from all our impurities, and reconsecrate us to Your service for ever and ever.

All—**Amen!**



Preparation of the Gifts

P —Pray, brethren . . .

All—**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

Prayer over the Offerings

P —Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—**Amen!**

Preface of Lent I

P —The Lord be with you!

All—**And with your spirit!**

P —Lift up your hearts!

All—**We lift them up to the Lord!**

P —Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All—**It is right and just!**

P —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, more eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries by which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All—**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P —The mystery of faith!

All—**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!**



All—**Our Father . . .**

P —Deliver us, Lord . . .

All—**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever!**

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P —Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are

those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.

Prayer after Communion

P –As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P –The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P –Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. *(Pause)* Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbor, they may fulfill the whole of your commands.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All—Amen!

P –Go in peace to love and serve the Lord by observing His Commandments.

All—Thanks be to God!

We Are God's Most Precious Temples

For centuries, the Temple of Jerusalem had been the pride of all Jews, the heart of the nation, the foundation of their firm trust in God's protection against all enemies.

Like all pious Jews, **Jesus loved the Temple. In it he prayed to the Father with all the sincerity of a devoted Son. There he preached the Good News of the Kingdom.** And when he saw that the "house of prayer" had been turned into a "den of thieves," he flared up with the indignation of the Son who sees the Father's House desecrated. *(See Jn 2:15-16 and parallels.)*

But the Temple, like all other religious structures and characters in the life of Israel, was only a provisional arrangement, a symbol of the reality that was to come. **The real and definitive temple of God is Jesus Christ himself. He is the "New Temple"** – a Temple not made of stones or by human hands, but by God Himself. His loving heart is the pure altar on which the perfect sacrifice of an unreserved filial commitment is offered unceasingly to the glory of the Father, and in atonement for the sins of all mankind.

Made one with Christ at our baptism, we too have become part of this living temple. The Holy Spirit has consecrated us to God's service in Christ and through Christ. **The sanctifying presence of the Spirit makes us more precious temples than the finest ones in the world.**

This is indeed a great dignity. Like the Jews of old, however, we are continuously in danger of forgetting the sacredness of our person. We may forget that **our dignity derives from our union with Christ.** And from forgetfulness or lack of appreciation to profanation there is but one step. **From temples of the All-Holy God, our persons may become shrines of false gods and idols.** Our lives may be turned into a deadly liturgy to pride, lust, selfishness, aggressiveness, greed . . .

This saddens our Lord much more than the sight of the traders and moneychangers he chased away from the Temple of Jerusalem. This Lent, in our quest for a new and fuller life, we are invited to re-awaken to the sacredness of our persons and of every human person, especially the baptized. **This is the time for a thorough purification from all profanations and unbecoming presence of "idols" in our lives.** This is the time for a restoration of the masterpiece of God's love to its original splendor. This is the time for a **re-dedication** of ourselves to the Source of all Holiness, in order that everything that is in us may become a hymn of glory and praise to the Triune God.



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