

## Third Sunday of Lent

By Campion P. Gavalier, O.S.B.

### Gospel Summary

Since the Passover was near, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival with his fellow Jews. When he arrives at the temple area, he drives out those who were selling animals for sacrifice as well as the money changers, saying, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." When the temple authorities (the "Jews") demanded a sign from Jesus for what he had done, he said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." After Jesus was raised from the dead his disciples remembered what he had said. They realized he was speaking of the temple of his body, and came to believe the Scripture and what he had spoken. John adds that Jesus was able to recognize true belief in him because he could read the human heart.

### Life Implications

The idea of where one lives or dwells is perhaps the central theme of the fourth gospel. John begins his gospel by telling us that Jesus is the Word who became flesh and made his dwelling among us. "In the beginning" the Word was dwelling with God, and the Word was God. Immediately after his baptism in the Jordan, we hear the first words that Jesus speaks in the fourth gospel. He sees two disciples of John the Baptist following him and says to them, "What are you looking for?" They reply, "Rabbi, where do you dwell?" Jesus replies, "Come, and you will see."

We already are alerted to the fact that John's gospel is a gospel of incarnation. Its essence is sacramental or symbolic: the extraordinary is actualized in the ordinary. The eternal Word becomes present and is revealed by dwelling among us. Thus we realize that the disciples' question about where Jesus is dwelling is not merely about a street address somewhere in Galilee. When Jesus replies "Come, and you will see," we realize he also means seeing with the eyes of faith. When he speaks to his disciples, we realize he is also speaking to us.

The astonishing good news that Jesus reveals is that anyone who believes in him will dwell where he dwells, with the Father. John's gospel is the narrative of the signs that Jesus does so that those whom he encountered then, and those who hear the gospel now might believe and have life in him (20:30-31). John presents various types of people who refuse to see the "extraordinary" through the signs, and also the beloved disciples who do see and come to believe in Jesus.

Today's gospel is a prophetic warning so that we will not be like the temple authorities who do not see that Jesus is the one sent by God to dwell among us in new ways. Jesus' action in the temple is in the tradition of the prophets. They rebuked the people who thought they were safe by coming to the temple while committing all sorts of abominations (Jer 7). Jesus like the prophets before him loved the temple, but he is warning us that even the most holy created realities can be made obstacles to believing in him and believing what he has spoken. The temple truly was the dwelling place of the divine presence: the holy place of prayer and communion with God. The temple authorities believed this, but they had narrowed their vision, and thus were unable to see that Jesus himself was the new temple. He himself is the indestructible dwelling place of the divine presence, of prayer and communion with God.

We can reduce the meaning of the Christian sacraments to suit our own purposes, and thus close our eyes to other signs of the divine presence to which the sacraments point. For Catholics the most holy sacrament of the Risen Lord's presence is the Bread of the Eucharist. It is possible to believe in this sacramental divine presence and at the same time to ignore what Jesus has spoken to us of his presence in the least of his brothers and sisters. It might give us pause to note that the criterion of final judgment that Jesus tells us about is not whether we recognize his presence in the Eucharist, but whether we respond with compassion to his presence in the least of his brothers and sisters (Mt 25:31-46).

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

Exodus 20: 1-17

1 Corinthians 1: 22-25

John 2: 13-25

March 11, 2012

## 四 旬 期 第 三 主 日

林 思 川

### 耶 穌 清 潔 聖 殿

經文分析：雖然按照禮儀選經的循環，今年是所謂「馬爾谷年」，但是四旬期第三、四和五主日的福音，則跳出馬爾谷福音而選自若望福音。信仰團體在這個主日的感恩禮中一起聆聽，第四部福音所報導的「耶穌清潔聖殿」事件（若二，13-25）。

### 猶 太 人 的 逾 越 節 ？

耶穌在加里肋亞的加納參加婚宴時行了第一個神蹟（若二，1-10），之後他和門徒們下到葛法翁住了幾天，然後就上到全猶太民族的宗教中心耶路撒冷。福音說當時「猶太人的逾越節近了」，這種說法使人感到奇怪，似乎福音作者和讀者都不是猶太人。事實當然並非如此，福音作者指示透過這種筆法，顯示出他們和猶太人之間已存有相當的距離感。

### 清 潔 聖 殿 的 行 動

耶穌來到聖殿區域，激烈地把販賣牲畜和兌換銀錢的人都趕出去，並責備他們把聖殿變成了商場。我們習慣用「耶穌清潔聖殿」來稱呼這個事件，一般人或許會認為這種「商業行為」是完全不能想像的，然而事實卻不盡然如此。

### 聖 殿 「 商 業 行 為 」 的 歷 史 背 景

首先，這些商業行為並不是發生在聖殿區域中心地帶，而是在聖殿外圍的「外邦人的庭院」裡。其次，這些商業行為事實上是一種行之有年，而且一直被猶太社會接受的「方便性」服務。因為猶太人有到聖殿朝聖義務，在此祭獻犧牲並繳納殿稅，這些商人的存在，目的乃是方便朝聖者準備犧牲和供品，以及兌換繳納殿稅所需的特殊錢幣（在古敘利亞提洛所鑄造的錢幣）。

### 耶 穌 的 話 語

耶穌說：「不要使我父的殿宇成為商場」。這話使人們想起匝加利亞先知的預言：「到那一天，在萬軍上主的殿裡，必再沒有一個商人」（匝十四，21）。匝加利亞先知發言的目的，是指向一個更好的聖殿崇拜禮儀；然而福音作者的目的則更為強烈，他表達出聖殿根本不再是舉行崇拜天主的禮儀之所。因此耶穌在聖殿的作為，應該被歸類為「先知性」的批判行動。

### 門 徒 的 瞭 解

門徒們看見所發生的事，想起了聖詠六九，10的話：「我對你殿宇所懷的熱忱，把我耗盡」。這是他們對這個事件的第一個瞭解；但是耶穌對於天父的殿宇所擁有的熱忱，不只是這個象徵性的抗議行動而已，因為他對聖殿的熱忱，最後將把他帶入死亡。

### 猶 太 人 的 責 難

在若望福音中，猶太人代表着與耶穌敵對的勢力，他們是不相信耶穌的人，因此要求他行一個奇蹟，以證明自己有權柄做這些事。耶穌的回答允諾了一個外在可見的記號：「三天之內重建毀壞的聖殿」，但卻含有先決條件：「你們（猶太人）拆毀這座聖殿吧！」這當然是一個令猶太人無法想像的條件，因為對猶太人而言，聖殿毀壞的意義就是審判。

### 耶 穌 的 死 亡 與 復 活

猶太默示文學作品顯示，猶太人的確期待一個新的，光輝燦爛的聖殿。若望福音的作者運用這個傳統的期待，講述這個故事；但是他真正的目的，則是用聖殿的毀滅與建立，來暗喻耶穌的死亡與復活：「三天之內，我要把聖殿重建起來」。由於猶太人當然不能聽明白耶穌的話的真正含義，乃是指經由他的死亡與復活，他要取代這個舊的聖殿。因為他們所能想到的，只是他們眼前這個花了四十六年建築的聖殿。

### 聖 經 與 耶 穌 的 話

清潔聖殿的故事的結尾（二，22）如同加納婚宴的故事結尾一樣（二，11），又強調了門徒們的信仰。門徒們在耶穌復活後，想起耶穌的話，就相信了聖經（舊約），也相信了耶穌的話。由這樣的記載使我們看出，在作者寫作福音之時，在他所生活的信仰團體中，「耶穌的話」已具有和「聖經」相同的地位。

### 耶 穌 事 件 所 可 能 產 生 的 效 果

任何熟悉對觀福音的人都會問，為什麼若望福音把耶穌「清潔聖殿」的時間，放在福音的開始之處。這可能是因為福音作者認為，這個故事和加納婚宴的故事放在一起，使人清楚看出耶穌的作為往往造成兩種對立的效果：救援和審判；信仰和排斥；認知和誤解

### 真 正 的 信 仰

在這兩種對立效果之外還有另一種可能的道路。福音作者在這個事件之後，以摘要的方式述說，一些人因為耶穌所行的奇跡而相信了他，但是耶穌卻不信任這些人，因為他能看透人心。這說明建立在奇跡之上的信仰，是不穩固的：真正而完整的信仰，並不是以奇跡為基礎，而是必須接納耶穌的整個生命，並且跟隨他。只有在耶穌死亡復活之後，人們才有可能認識他並真正的信從他。