

NOVEMBER 22, 2019
Memorial of St. Cecilia, Virgin & Martyr
Luke 19: 45-48

CLEANSE ME FROM MY SINS

Jesus Christ always used strong words to emphasize a point to the people, His audience, and in particular to the Scribes and Pharisees, to those who are hard-headed if he saw things that were not in accordance with God's plan, and perspective. The gospel for today is one of many instances that Jesus was "mad or angry". And this is the only incident where He uses physical force. What makes Him upset and drive out the money changers in the temple at Jerusalem?

According to Pope Francis: "Jesus' cleansing of the moneychangers from the Temple is a reminder to Christians of the need for "authentic worship" and "conformity between liturgy and life. The disciple of Jesus goes to church to encounter the Lord and to find in His grace, working in the Sacraments, the strength to think and act according to the Gospel. On which account, we cannot delude ourselves into thinking that we can enter the house of the Lord and "cover ourselves over", with prayers and devotional practices, attitudes contrary to the requirements of justice, of honesty or of charity towards our neighbor."¹

We can see in the action of Jesus that the temple, the sanctuary, the church is a house of prayer wherein it honors God the Father. He was angry and used physical force to drive out the money changer's table because they took advantage of the poor and forced them to pay many times more than what was right – IN THE HOUSE OF GOD! They exploited the worshippers especially the poor and those who had nothing to offer. They hindered and over-burdened these people to the authentic worship of God. These money changers' act of robbery of the poor was not only humiliating and dishonoring to God but unfair and unreasonable toward their neighbor.

¹ <https://fromrome.wordpress.com/2015/03/09/pope-francis-homily-at-ognissanti-march-7-2015/>

My brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is telling us that cleansing our own temple means making God our priority, the first among everything, and making more space for God to guide our lives. Everything must be guided by justice and compassion. It also means we need to worship God by our whole heart and being. We need constant renewal, to be open to repentance and not be closed to progress and regeneration. Every day, our journey in life will always entail some cleansing, renewal and repentance as we seek to do what God wants of us.

Let us ask therefore, in this Eucharist that we may be open every day to be renewed through the help of the Holy Spirit. Let us always cleanse our temple, our inner thought, our heart, our life, for God to enter and lead our lives.