

Points to Help Homily Preparation from a JPIC Perspective

Readings of the Third Sunday of Lent – Sunday, March 15, 2009

Ex 20:1-17 The Ten Commandments

1Cor 1:22-25 Christ crucified, the power and the wisdom of God

John 2: 13-25 Cleansing of the Temple

Theological points of the readings: Focus on Jesus as the temple. The destruction and rebuilding is a reference to Jesus' death and resurrection. This idea is especially clear in John's Gospel. Raymond Brown, in his commentary, indicates that the word used for the restoration of the temple is "egeirein," to raise up. In 1 Cor 1:22-25, we are reminded that God's wisdom and power is manifested in Jesus, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. These basic theological points are introduced by the Exodus account of the Ten Commandments. We are called to focus on Jesus as the New Temple.

The practice of faith and faith practice: Thinking about the nature of religion brings to mind an assortment of images associated with ritual and worship. The homilist can elaborate on this idea. The first reading reminds us that, often, religion is perceived as a matter of following law and tradition. Commentators suggest that the concise directness of the Ten Commandments provides us a way to internalize the law that is clear, direct, simple, undisputable and known by everybody; it gives us a clear way to practice faith. But is this a way to put faith into practice as Jesus would teach us? The teaching of Jesus is more than a set of rules.

The homilist can suggest ways that our following of Jesus is a sharing in his death and resurrection. This understanding requires that we see Jesus as the New Law and the New Temple.

From the JPIC Perspective: The homilist can ask why this idea involves destruction and rebuilding.

Some examples may be drawn from the homilist's personal experience of change and resistance to change. Taking a JPIC perspective, many examples can be used to illustrate the pain and goodness of social or political change. A most appropriate example is the current economic situation. Ultimately, in order to bring some stability to our economic system, change will have to occur. Change may be painful. We may be challenged to live with less and be more charitable. We may be challenged to live more accountably and not abuse or squander our resources. Perhaps we can look to the wisdom of God found in Jesus, a destruction of the old and a rebuilding of the new.

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