

## Third Sunday of Lent, March 4, 2018

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalms 19:8-11; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25; John 2:13-25



by Ingrid Delgado

When Catholics enter a sanctuary, we often look up to gaze and meditate upon an image of Christ crucified, the first-century method of execution. While our Savior was sinless and we are not, the realization that the Son of God died the death of a criminal calls us to quite literally recognize the face of our Lord in the imprisoned, in those sentenced to death, and in the executed.



May we remember this Lent, and always, that this death our Lord freely accepted and his subsequent rising from the dead offers redemption to all of us. We must not give in to the temptation of limiting God's inexhaustible mercy and grace by judging some people as beyond Christ's saving work. Yes, even the sins of those who have caused great harm are but a drop in God's ocean of mercy. And that mercy is also our only hope for healing for the victims who have been harmed by the sins of others.

In today's Gospel, we encounter Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers and driving out with a whip those who had turned the temple into a marketplace (Jn 2:13-15). In the midst of this cleansing from activities that were defacing its holiness and taking advantage of those who had journeyed long and far, he teaches them that He would raise the temple, His body, in three days (Jn 2:19).

Christ does not limit his resurrection to a select few. All of us are invited into the mystery of his life, death, and resurrection. Consistently in the Gospels, we see Christ's unlimited, unconditional giving of himself, intentionally encountering those on the peripheries of the time: Gentiles, tax-collectors, servants, women, children, widows, the ill, lepers; even to those who denied him and the thief who was executed next to him.

Who is on our peripheries today? Who are our modern lepers, today's untouchables? How can we imitate our Lord in cleansing our temples and our communities of injustices and abuses? How can we simultaneously join that righteous anger with the grace to unconditionally extend participation in Christ's saving work to all?

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