



Bukás Loób sa Diyós

(Open in Spirit to God)

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITY

District of Vancouver

District Council of Stewards

REFLECTION

(Ewad and Bel Pascual Prayer Leader)

March 3, 2024 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Theme: We embrace Christ's work of redemption by keeping God's commandment.

Promise: "The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul... giving wisdom to the simple."

Our scripture reading tonight revisits the story of the cleansing of the temple. This is one of the few occasions in scripture that shows Jesus in a state of rage as He lashed out at those who 'created a marketplace' in the house of the Lord.

In this event, the money changers and the livestock merchants were bewildered by Jesus' actions. They did not expect to find a man so committed to maintaining the sanctity of the house of the Lord.

When asked to state His authority for His punitive action, Jesus replied, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up.'

Our scripture studies today show that when Jesus spoke of 'the temple' in this event, He was figuratively referring to His body.

The story of the cleansing of the temple presents Jesus' frustration at how men violated the sacredness of the House of the Lord. It speaks of the offence that Jesus took at this act of disrespect and how Jesus expressed His protests by overturning the tables of the money changers and driving away the merchants who conducted market activities in the House of the Lord.

This incident also gives us a glimpse of how protective Jesus was of His relationship with God the Father. The outrage that Jesus demonstrated in this event can gauge the level of respect and reverence by which Jesus held His relationship with God the Father.

The Cleansing of the Temple story is about an event that took place two thousand years ago, and when one reads it in the present age, it is easy for the reader to take a detached perspective and feel removed from the incident. At least, this was how I felt when I initially read this scripture.



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However, the idea that Jesus used the word 'temple' to allude to His physical body is powerful and requires a deeper reflection.

When I read this scripture, I can't help but ask the following question: What relevance does this story have in my present life?

The very idea of a temple evokes an atmosphere of reverence and worship. It is a place of peace and quiet that inspires a meditative and reflective mood. Its serenity draws a person into a holy communion with God.

If my body is the temple of God, then I need to promote its peace and create an environment that invites a conversation with the Lord.

As I reflected deeper into this scripture reading, I slowly became aware of a lot of noise reverberating in my heart. My worldly preoccupations drive this noise—the longing of my flesh for worldly comfort and pleasures, my sinful thoughts and attachment to material things, and my ill feelings and intentions toward people in my family and community circle.

A connection slowly emerged between this story and my present-day spiritual realities, and I began to see how relevant this scripture reading is to my faith life.

I feel a sense of guilt as I realize that, like the merchants and the money changers that Jesus drove out of His Father's house, I, too, have similarly 'made a marketplace' of the house of the Lord.

I realized that I have engaged in many worldly concerns that depart from God and generate so much noise in my heart that I can hardly hear the Lord's voice.

I now realize I am not as far removed from this story as I initially thought. The Lord's message emerges from the scriptures with a voice that tells me to clean up my spiritual life and reset its focus on God.

The frustration demonstrated by Jesus when He overturned the money changers' tables and drove away those who made a marketplace of the temple grounds speaks of the outrage that God must feel today as He patiently waits for me to realize the futility of my worldly endeavours and to reorient my life towards God.



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This scripture reading reminds me of the level of commitment with which the Lord expects me to maintain my connection with Him.

For it is written: For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation*;

⁶but showing love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Ex. 20: 5-6)

The Lord God has a great plan for me. He wants me to experience the joy and peace that derive from a life founded upon God's love and to live my life following the Lord's ways.

God provided the Ten Commandments, the Perfect Laws of the Lord, as a guideline to help me achieve that objective.

In our scripture reading tonight, the Lord tells me to give up my worldly attachments, collect myself, and refocus my life on God. Only then will I fully appreciate the joy and peace that flow from a life founded upon obedience to God.