

SUNDAY PLUS

Searching for Jesus

From a building to a person

The Temple was based on animal sacrifice so the sellers had a wide variety of animals for sale; the buyers would purchase the animal according to the size of their sin. They first had to change the Greek and Roman coinage, which carried images, into the coinage accepted by the Temple. You can imagine the main courtyard of the Temple as a busy, throbbing market-place, dominated by competing money-changers and rival merchants loudly announcing special deals.

Into this busy market-place Jesus strides to upset the Temple rituals as he drives out the animals and overturns the tables of the money-changers. He makes the merchants and money-changers unemployed; he wants an end to this weary way of worshipping God. By the time John's Gospel has emerged, the Temple has long been destroyed and the evangelist's community asserts its faith: Jesus has replaced the Temple; God's presence is no longer located in a place but in a person, in the person of Jesus.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

Jesus Cleanses the Temple scene (1678) in the church of Chiesa di San Pantalon, Venice, Italy by Giovanni Antonio Fumiani. Renata Sedmakova /Shutterstock.com

by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

The Temple was not a local place of worship in Jerusalem: it was the national centre of worship for the Jewish people at the time of Jesus and it was the people's destination for pilgrimage. It was also a central place of power and income for the religious authorities. The Temple attracted criticism from the prophets. Hosea roundly condemned its rituals: "For I desire steadfast love, not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, not burnt offerings (6:6a). Jeremiah dismissed the Temple as a "den of thieves" (7:11) and was persecuted as a result. The same will happen to Jesus.

Pigeons matter

by Austin Owens

So what had the pigeons done to be driven away by Jesus – or was he simply saving them from certain death? They were caged and ready for sacrifice when someone handed over the money. They had no choice. They would die so that someone else's sins might be forgiven, but the guilty people who handed them over – the vendors and the money-changers – were unconcerned. Jesus was angry with the traders and freed the pigeons – or some of them.

Some people suffer because it's almost as if they are invisible: we don't see their pain. Yet even "invisible" people have rights to justice; to a hearing; to freedom. In the world's scheme of things, a pigeon's heartbeat

is unimportant – except to the pigeon. I might not be able to rescue all of life's victims, but perhaps I could help a few people around me towards a greater sense of freedom and joy. Pigeons matter.

Austin Owens is a freelance Catholic writer.

Lord, be with people who are searching for you and cannot find you. Teach us to find you in each other. Amen.

Fasting from?

by Mary Bell

So here we are, well into Lent, the period of self-denial, of "doing something for Lent". What did you go for this year? The usual? Giving up chocolate or alcohol, or perhaps cigarettes – the healthy option? Self-denial is a traditional method of showing sorrow for our sins.

Did you think about trying something a bit different this year? How about adopting

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Jesus' gaze goes to the great and the small. He looks at all of us, but, in particular, he looks at each one of us. He looks at our big problems, our great joys; and he also looks at our small things, because he is near. This is how Jesus looks at us.

Pope Francis

Today:

Exodus 20:1-17
1 Corinthians 1:22-25
John 2:13-25

Monday:

2 Kings 5:1-15
Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday:

Daniel 3:25, 34-43
Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday:

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday:

Jeremiah 7:23-28
Luke 11:14-23

Friday:

Hosea 14:2-10
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday:

Hosea 5:15 – 6:6
Luke 18:9-14

Saturday (S):

St John Ogilvie (Feast):
Isaiah 50:5-9
2 Corinthians 1:3-7
John 12:24-26

Next Sunday:

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
Ephesians 2:4-10
John 3:14-21