

FIRST READING

The law was given through Moses.

A reading from the book of Exodus

20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17

The Lord gave Moses these commandments:

I am the Lord your God.

I brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

Do not worship any god except me.

Do not misuse my name.

I am the Lord your God,

and I will punish anyone who misuses my name.

Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me.

Respect your father and mother,

and you will live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

Do not murder.

Be faithful in marriage.

Do not steal.

Do not tell lies about others.

Do not want what belong to someone else.

Do not want anyone's house or wife or slaves

or cattle or donkeys or anything else.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

95:1-2, 7e-9c

R. (John 6:68c) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The Law of the Lord is perfect;

it gives us new life.

His teachings last forever,

and they give wisdom

to ordinary people.

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The Lord's instruction is right;
it makes our hearts glad.
His commands shine brightly,
and they give us light.

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

All of his decisions
are correct and fair.
They are worth more
than the finest gold.

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Ezekiel 18:31

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Rid yourselves of all your sins
and make a new heart and a new spirit.

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

2:13-22

Not long before the Jewish festival of Passover,
Jesus went to Jerusalem.
There he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves in the temple.
He also saw moneychangers sitting at their tables.
So he took some rope and made a whip.
Then he chased everyone out of the temple,
together with their sheep and cattle.
He turned over the tables of the moneychangers
and scattered their coins.

Jesus said to the people who had been selling doves,
“Get those doves out of here!

Don't make my Father's house a marketplace."

The disciples then remembered that the Scriptures say,
"My love for your house burns in me like a fire."

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus,
"What miracle will you work to show us why you have done this?"

"Destroy this temple," Jesus answered,
"and in three days I will build it again!"

The leaders replied, "It took forty-six years to build this temple.
What makes you think you can rebuild it in three days?"

But Jesus was talking about his body as a temple.
And when he was raised from death,
his disciples remembered what he had told them.
Then they believed the Scriptures and the words of Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Third Sunday of Lent — Cycle B

Prayer: Dear Jesus, we are almost half way into our Lenten days. We are doing more good deeds and saying more prayers. We want to become more like you every day. Thank you for helping us. Thank you for being our God. Amen.

Readings: Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19:8-11; 1 Cor 1:22-25; Jn 2:13-25

We have talked of ashes and blessings. We read the stories of Noah and we shared about the COVENANT—promise/agreement. This Sunday we learn about **LAWS** and why they are guides and **SIGNS** of God's love leading us to holiness.

It is clear from Scripture, and our lives, that at times people put too much attention, energy and money on the wrong things. The passage from Exodus reminds us of one of our most important mysteries: ONE GOD. When we read the 10 commandments, we forget that when the people first heard these: It was new! They hadn't really thought about how they treated one another—within the same tribe or people—as having any impact on God. They were learning about a God who didn't desire human sacrifice (REMEMBER: Don't harm the boy—Isaac!) This ONE GOD was different than pleasing the god of wind, rain, fire, crops, sickness and health. One God instead of many? WOW.

The story of Jesus in the temple takes on new meaning with this understanding. Jesus made a whip and drove them out of the temple because the people were using externals—money and animals for sacrifice—trying to “win” God's approval. Jesus knew: God wants our hearts not the things we can buy or own!!

People, the Gospel states, “began to believe in his name when they saw the signs Jesus was doing.” When the people could see Jesus loving everyone; healing others; forgiving others, telling others to be free and walk and talk. WOW, who wouldn't believe. Well, we know who.

US. We sometimes get stuck into believing, at least acting, like God needs “things” to make up for what is not happening in our relationships—in families, nations, countries and the world!

Whether there are 10 LAWS/COMMANDMENTS or 12 or 8 or just 2—it is clear: Our God wants our hearts and our love—for self and others! Love is the only law that we can never fulfill too much.

Activities:

In your Lenten Booklet, turn to page 3. Write the word, LAW. Talk about laws as the rules that help us be our best self and to live in harmony and peace. No matter where we go, whether at home or school or wherever, we have laws/rules. When we can agree on laws and rules, life is pleasant and there is peace.

Once we start ‘breaking rules’ people can get hurt. Talk about some practical laws—running red lights; not paying for food or gasoline; how to use appliances or equipment. Then, talk

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about laws and rules that help people be their best self: Telling the truth; respecting another's property and obeying parents and teachers.

Do we honor, obey and respect laws because we have to or because we want to be good and loving? God really wants us to honor, obey and respect laws that show love, compassion, forgiveness and sets people free to do the good and right thing.

On page the bottom of page 3, draw a picture that shows people either praying in church or doing loving actions.

In closing: Form a circle and hold hands. Ask for a moment of quiet. Invite everyone to say one law or rule they broke. (Very simply: I lied; I hurt my brother/sister; I didn't obey my mom.) When every one has shared, or it is quiet, Pray: God, we stand with our brothers and sisters in prayer. We are sorry we have broken laws/rules which have caused sadness, hurt and angry feelings. Help us to be good SIGNS of your love this week. Help us everyday to obey because we want to not just because we have to. AMEN.