

## READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS 17:3-7

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses.

'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said.

'Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?'

Moses appealed to the Lord. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said.

'A little more and they will stone me!'

The Lord said to Moses,

'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go.

I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb.

You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.'

This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, 'Is the Lord with us, or not?'

**The Word of the Lord.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM PS 18:8-11

The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple.

**LORD, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.**

The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes.

**LORD, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.**

The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just.

**LORD, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.**

They are more to be desired than gold, than the purest of gold  
and sweeter are they than honey, than honey from the comb.

**LORD, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.**

### A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE ROMANS 5:1-2, 5-8

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory.

This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men.

It is not easy to die even for a good man

- though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die -

but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

**The Word of the Lord.**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!  
God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,  
that all who believe in him might have eternal life. John 3:16

### **A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 2:13-25**

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem,  
and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons,  
and the money changers sitting at their counters there.  
Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple,  
cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins,  
knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers,  
'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.'  
Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me.

The Jews intervened and said,  
'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?'  
Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.'  
The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary:  
are you going to raise it up in three days?'

But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body,  
and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this,  
and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name  
when they saw the signs that he gave,  
but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them;  
he never needed evidence about any man;  
he could tell what a man had in him.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

#### **REFLECTION**

*from Sr Patricia Stevenson RSJ.*

What triggered this explosion from Jesus? Was crass materialism debasing the Temple which Jesus and all Jewish people at that time valued as the home of God's real and abiding Presence? Jesus acted like the great prophets who often, in a very visible actions, were in fact teaching their people about God. People challenged Jesus concerning his right to act in such a prophetic role. "What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?" Jesus offered in return a riddle which was in fact a profound truth: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." John's Gospel, written about 60 years after Jesus' Resurrection, presents Jesus referring to himself, his death and his resurrection.

John's Gospel presented the Christian community's shift in focus on how God is present amongst us. Departing from the focus on the Temple, the Gospel focussed on the Spirit-filled heart of each disciple where the Glory of God both dwells and will be visible in our daily lives. Therefore, for us today, even every day, every small step we take in prayer, service and learning - grounded in our trust in God - is momentous! Come Holy Spirit...