A Homily for Sunday 7th March

Gospel Reading – John 21: 13-22

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild” There is not much about a gentle Jesus in this morning’s gospel reading. It’s the very opposite in fact. He seems to be very angry and he physically throws out those in the temple selling animals for sacrifice and the money lenders as well. Christ cleanses the temple in Jerusalem and when challenged about his actions, he responds with these words, “destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up”. Half way through lent the cross and resurrection loom large. The crisis is almost upon us and this cleansing of the temple takes place at Passover.

We have here a clear prediction of what awaits Jesus on his final visit to Jerusalem. Suffering and death, destroy this sanctuary, but also the victory over sin and death which will be guaranteed by his resurrection from the dead on the “third day”.

The historic temple will be destroyed by the Romans, but of course the real enemy is human sin. But Christ will triumph over sin and death. By cleansing the temple now Christ shows that his resurrection is about creating new life. Much will be destroyed before the victory can come, but we have a firm hope that what is pulled down and destroyed God can raise up again. This hope of restoration on a human but also cosmic level calls us to a deeper and closer trust in God. It teaches us not to rely on our own efforts or power but on the power and strength of God at work in Jesus.

Lord cast out from my life all that keeps me from you, pull down all the false idols on which I am tempted to rely, and at the last bring me into your kingdom.

Fr. Tim Kaye

