



Christ banishes temptation from temple - mosaic in Monastery of St. Panteleimon, CO

March 3, 2024

## Third Sunday of Lent

Ex 20:1-17 | 1 Cor 1:22-25 | Jn 2:13-25

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

### **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

When I was a kid, my older siblings used to tell me what to do (no surprise there!) and often backed up their, ahem, “commands,” by saying, “Mom and Dad said so.” Interestingly, sometimes that statement was not true (!), and I would get the right information – what to do and the correct way to do it – directly from my parents. My experience is not unlike that of the Israelites in today’s first reading. As they escaped from bondage in Egypt and followed the Lord through the guidance of Moses, they developed their own ways of doing things, listened to the wrong people and acted as if they were indeed conveying truth. But the Lord steps in to correct them, and in “a direct, unmediated communication” of truth to them, gives them commandments to follow. (USCCB commentary) These instructions for how to live a moral life in relationship with God and with one another are the basis of the covenant they made there with the Lord. They are the foundation of the new covenant in which we partake through Jesus Christ, who came into our history as the perfect, unmediated communication of God.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

#### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

How do you envision Jesus? It’s easy to think of him as kind and easy-going – the type of person who never lets his feathers get ruffled, no matter how many times the Pharisees question and challenge him. However, we see a different side of Jesus today – one in which he is flipping over tables and brandishing a whip. He is driving out those who are using his Father’s house as a place to make money rather than as a place to worship. In the drama of that scene, let’s not overlook what comes next in the reading. The people there at the temple, obviously taken aback by what they have seen, ask for a sign to justify what authority Jesus has to drive people out of the temple. Jesus says, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” That confused people then, but we know today that the true temple is Jesus and that his rising from the dead would be the sign they sought. Just as the commandments of God have authority, so does Jesus who came as perfect obedience to those commandments to help us follow them ourselves.

**PRAY** It’s easy for us to think we’re doing a good job keeping the Lord’s commandments, but at the same time the line between right and wrong can seem blurred at times and we may relax a bit on some of their finer points. Try this week to dig deep within ourselves and turn to prayer for the strength to do what is right, seeking the wisdom of God rather than relying on human wisdom.