

We do not often have this picture of Christ. Whip in hand He overturned the tables, driving people and animals helter-skelter from the temple. He was claiming the Temple in His Father's name, rededicating it a house of prayer. Jesus pointed the people back to the fulfillment of the Law. He went much further turning the hearts of the people away from the thought that they could be saved by the keeping of the law, He turned them back to an expectation of salvation in the Messiah. God is a great and wonderful Father. He has given us the rules of life to make us more comfortable and more at home in this world. Following the "rules" enhances our relationship with God and our fellow humans. The "rules" do not make the relationship, the relationship leads us to love and respect.

® Lord God most Holy, You who dwell in Heaven, without You there is no help and in You there is nothing to be afraid. We come before You as the Guardian and Defender of all who lift up their hearts to You. In our desolation, affliction and sorrow we come before You seeking Your Eternal Mercy.

We thank You for the Love of Jesus and that in His compassion and grace He freely gave Himself as the satisfaction for our sins, by giving up His perfect life as an offering for our redemption and salvation. We thank You for the finished work of our Lord: His Holy life, His blessed example, His gracious teaching, His Loving companionship, and His atoning death. With grateful hearts we thank You for the willing spirit in which He gave Himself as Your suffering Servant.

Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may have the inheritance in Your Eternal kingdom. Help us imitate the example of Christ and walk in love. Grant that as children of the heavenly light we may earnestly repent of our sins, forsake the ways of darkness and error, and follow in the paths of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Cast out all uncleanness that assails us. Fill our souls with holiness, love of Your Word, and every pure grace and virtue.

For all who are in any want of body or soul, for all of our loved ones who are in distant places, for all who have strayed from Your truth, for all who are in temptation, for all who are suffering sickness and pain, for all who mourn, we pray this day, O Lord. Pour down Your blessing on them according to their need, hear their prayers, comfort them with Your presence and surround them with Your Holy angels.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**
Unite us as one in spirit in Your Church on Earth and bring all Your children
to Your eternal heavenly kingdom. We pray, O Father, for these matters, in
the name of Your Son Jesus Christ.

LENT THREE

IX g: Aeolian

For zeal for your house has
—consumed me,*
and the reproaches of those who
reproach you have fall | en on me.

Deliver me from sinking | in the mire;*
let me be delivered from my
enemies and from the deep — waters.
Let not the flood sweep over me, or the
deep | swallow me up,*
or the pit close its mouth | over me.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

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—consumed me,*
and the reproaches of those who
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(Antiphon, Psalm 69:9;
Psalm 69:14-16)

O God, Whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] — Jesus,*
the founder and perfecter | of our faith,
Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despis | ing the shame,*
and is seated at the right hand of the | throne of God.

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

(John 2:19)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: When we consider the perfection of Your Laws, O Lord, we realize how far we have strayed from the path which You have laid out for us. We too often loved and trusted other things and people more than You. For our transgressions we implore Your forgiveness. Send Your Holy Spirit that He may give us power to overcome our sin and that He may bless the witness of Your Church in the world, that the world may be led to know the goodness of Your Law and accept Your authority to rule and govern our lives. Only then will we see our assurance exists only in the Gospel, the authority of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE CITY OF SAN JOSE USED PHOTO RADAR TO CATCH SPEEDERS. The residents of San Jose asked the police department to use the photo radar units in the expectation of slowing people down in their neighborhoods. Those caught speeding were quick to challenge the tickets. The basis of their challenge was that there was no authority, there was no law which allowed for the use of photo radar. No one challenged the fact that they were speeding, they simply challenged the idea that they could be ticketed by the use of a radar set up connected to a camera. No one disputed with Jesus that the money changers and animal sellers belonged in the temple. They disputed His authority to be the one to throw them out of the temple. The argument wasn't that they were wrong, only that He didn't have the right to tell them they were wrong. Don't be wrong, accept God's authority.

THEME OF THE DAY:

A House of Prayer

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 69:9;) Psalm 69:14-16

David was a type of Christ. Verse 9 of Psalm 69 is applied to Christ in the New Testament and is fulfilled in Jesus. King David was speaking of the spitefulness of his enemies. They criticized him for fasting and praying, and for singing songs with drunks. David's comfort was that he could go to God, Who is always there to help. Let my fears be prevented. Let me not fall into the gulf of despair. David found strength in calling to God. Jesus showed strength when He returned God's House to a place of prayer and praise. For doing the right thing He was criticized.

COLLECT

We pray that those who have gone astray will return to the truth of God's Word. This prayer was added to our Propers in 2006 to more accurately reflect the theme of the Bible lessons.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Exodus 20:1-17

When we hear what God has declared and done for us, then it is clear that loving God is the only reason for following His will. We were redeemed from the spiritual bondage of our sinful life. God delivered us from that bondage through the death and Resurrection of His Son. God established the relationship of a Father and His children, that we might enjoy life in Him. As His children we love and respect our Father. In the love of that relationship as respectful children we follow His rules.

GRADUAL—Hebrews 12:2

Hebrews chapter 12 compared the greater wonder of Heaven to our place here on Earth, and encourages us to look to Jesus (the Living Water) Who teaches us patience and perseverance.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The Jews and the Greeks rejected Christianity because of what they considered the foolishness of Christ's person and message. On the one hand, the claims of Christianity were considered easily dismissed because they could not be validated by proofs. The comfort in 1 Corinthians lies in the assurance that the substance and revelation of our faith are in and of God. The idea of the Son dying on a cross seems like weakness on God's part, (as if God couldn't save His own Son.) But it is really the massive strength of the Gospel of Salvation. From the cross we were given our strength, our purpose, our reason for endurance in this place of sin. In the death of Jesus we received eternal life.

VERSE—John 2:19

This is from our Gospel Lesson.