

### Lent 3 – Jesus Cleanses the Temple



The city of Jerusalem is like no other place I have visited on earth. Within the city there are places of prayer and pilgrimage for the Christian which mark specific events in the life of Jesus Christ and very often those sites have a church building which are simple and iconic. The vast majority were built by Italian architect, Antonio Barluzzi who

always tried to make his churches expressive of the events they commemorated.

For example, the Church on the Mount of Olives is built in the shape of a tear drop reminding pilgrims that this is where our Lord wept over Jerusalem. Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem?

He wept because He saw the racket that was going on there. He saw how the priests and the Temple shunned people who most needed help - the sick, the blind the lame. He saw how the Temple, the locus of prayer and

the dwelling place of the One True God, had become a den of thieves. The Temple and its leaders were so driven by their own agendas and were not living their original covenanted relationship with God. Consequently Jesus wept.

In overturning the tables of the money lenders in today's Gospel Jesus came to the notice of the chief priests and was signing His own death warrant. In the course of a few days the religious leaders organised a trial, accused him of sedition and blasphemy and by Friday on Golgotha they crucified him.

Of course Jesus was not the first or indeed the last person ever to be crucified, but when Jesus was crucified something was happening. It was as if all the badness and wickedness of all times was being absorbed by him. The nails which fastened him to the cross were in a way our sins & the sins of all times and all people. On the cross Jesus underwent all the suffering and pain which this world can muster and he looked evil right in the eye once and for all, and by his death and life giving resurrection we are saved and set free.

To my dying day I will not totally understand what was going on at Calvary. But what I do know is that on that old rugged Cross something so incredibly holy was going on, the like of which will never be seen on this earth again.

On one level the Cross is the cruellest invention of the human mind. It's a sign of cruelty and pain and the worse that we humans can do to one another. But on another level the Cross fills me with calm and peace because it speaks to the heart, and it simply says this: You can spit at me, you can beat me, you can ridicule me, you can scourge me, you can mock me and make me a crown of thorns, you can nail me to a cross but you can't stop me loving you.

And our response must surely be to say *Sotto voce*: Thank you - thank you my Lord Jesus Christ for what you have done for me on Calvary, for loving me so much, and for the promise of eternal life.