

TRINITY NEWS

Lent III The Temple of the Resurrection Body.

At Passover, the central festival for the Jews in recalling the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land, Jesus enacts a very prophetic rehearsal of the destruction of the temple. This caused him no immediate harm, but it was a decisive factor in his being brought to trial and executed.

It is the only act of physical violence attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. It apparently was symbolic for him as well. It indicated a clear breach with the past in that it clearly was an attack on the Temple practices and the whole temple state. This was how the Jews saw it and it was deadly for Jesus. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up” is also taken to be the temple of his own body by the writer of John's Gospel. That is, the destruction of one temple leads to the ultimate temple of the resurrected Christ. The reaction of the Jews is understandable. The temple was holy to them and the focus of making their God present to them in ritual.

It may have marked a decisive point in Jesus' understanding of his ministry role and his vocation as a messianic prophet.

We will not have to make a whip of cords and flog people out of the temple or overturn the tables of the money changers, but we will have to make decisive breaks with the past at some time in our lives. When we look at the resurrected Christ we are drawn into contemplations about our own resurrection. How much do we have to let go in order to be drawn into the heart of God? What is Christ really trying to say to us in this symbolic cleansing of the temple? Paul says that we are the temple of the Spirit, and that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us.

When we make any decisive break with the past we are also saying something about our destiny and our future hopes and dreams. It takes huge courage to make a break with the past and to set out on a new course. Paul Tillich called it “the courage to be”, and we now find ourselves going back to his books again to dredge from them nuggets of literary and philosophical and theological gold. “Courage can show us what being is, and being can show us what courage is.”

As Elizabeth II said of British victims of September 11 in New York, “Grief is the price we pay for love.” The grief of the cross was what Christ paid for the love that he had for the whole of humanity. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says, “for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God.”

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

- Mar 13th-15th (Tues-Thurs): Diocesan Convention
- Mar. 17th (Sat): ECW Exec. Board Meeting, 10am, Parish Hall
- March 17th (Sat): ECW General Meeting, 2pm, Parish Hall

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS:

2 Chronicles 36:14-23

Psalm 122

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 6:4-15