

Fr. Rudy's Reflections  
The Third Sunday of Lent  
March 3, 2024

## Jesus Is Our Temple

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Good storytellers employ an important literary device in their work called “climax” to artfully define the main conflict in a plot’s narrative and to set up its resolution. The word “climax” originates from the Greek word, *klimax*, which means ladder. And as one reads, hears, or watches a story evolve, the journey and its meaning become fully expressed. Typically, writers place the climax (or ladder) ninety percent of the way through the story, but sometimes they begin the tale with an explosive event to trick or conceal the true essence of the storyline. It is a clever, dramatic, and effective maneuver because it just might help us to remember and take the story to heart.

It is the Third Sunday of Lent, and in today’s Gospel, John presents the story of Jesus who enters the temple at Jerusalem at Passover time, and immediately is overcome with emotion by the scene, and thus, reacts in an uncharacteristic manner. With the zeal of a son who is seeing his Father’s house being dishonored, Jesus forcefully drives out the animals, merchants, and moneychangers who are corrupting the courtyard of the holy temple, the focal point of praise, worship, and sacrifice for God’s people. Jesus’s outrage over the haggling of wares and the changing of money was startling, yes, but his intention was purposeful. This beginning scene is not the climax of this Gospel; rather it allows the story and the revelation of Jesus’s authority and divinity to progress along a different path. The temple was always considered the summit of faith and reverence in the Jewish community, but now, with his passion, death, and resurrection, the temple was being rebuilt and connected to the body of Jesus Christ. He, in this paschal mystery, unites heaven and earth in an exodus from sin and death.

By disrupting the normal practices during Passover, Jesus powerfully alerted the Jewish community, and the religious authorities in particular, he was not just a mere pilgrim visiting the temple. His unusual response to the questions posed to him, when he is asked to validate his authority to act in God’s name with signs and wonders, provided climax for us all. “Destroy the temple and in three days I will raise it up” is a climactic moment in time that articulates the reestablishment and reorder of God’s presence in the world through his dear, begotten son. Jesus’s passion, death, and resurrection in this three-day period, which we anticipate during this Lenten season, reaffirm his impact on the world and to each of us. Let us rededicate our lives to strengthen our relationship with Our Lord and Savior during this holy season of Lent. And let us choose **him** to be the climax of our lives!

*“Jesus’ behavior recounted in today’s Gospel passage exhort us to live our life not in search of our own advantage and interests but for the glory of God who is love. . . [Help] us to reject the danger of also making our soul, which is God’s dwelling place, a house of trade, by living in constant search of our personal interests instead of generous and supportive love.”—Pope Francis, 2018*

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy