



He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, and spilled the coins of the money changers. (Gospel)

THE GOSPEL. John 2:13-25

“Take these out of here!”

This you told the sellers of doves.

For what
shall we make room
in your Father’s house,
Jesus?

More room for
love of God and our neighbor?
See all the world’s suffering
and make it all
well?

Show us how. We see the signs that you are
doing this very day. Help us trust in your
love.

Let all of us, brothers and sisters,
come together in the temple of your body and learn how to
care for each other.

THE FIRST READING. Exodus 20:1-17

In those days, God delivered these commandments.

Carve them
here, O
God,
into
our
stony hearts.

Rules
to guide us:
love God, and love our neighbor:
cure the sick, feed the hungry
free the imprisoned, heal
the planet.

Help us to love you as you love us, and
to love our neighbor as ourselves,
every day, in every way
in all we do and in
all we say.

THE SECOND READING. 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

*For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom,
and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

One
sign
only:
Christ
crucified

We trust the
nonsense
of God.

To the mirage of worldly might
we say, make us weak.

Give us the power
only of your cross.

(Anne Osdieck)

Reflection on the Readings: Deacon Peter Nixon

Nobody really likes disruption. But sometimes it's the only way organizations and individuals change and grow. In the Bible, we regularly encounter a God who is disruptive, often taking people away from the familiar and forcing them to cope with situations that are unexpected and challenging.

Today's first reading, from the Book of Exodus, seems like a straightforward story about God giving the faithful the Ten Commandments. But this only happens after Moses leads the people out of Egypt, away from everything they know. Even though they had been slaves, many of them complained to Moses that it was better to live as a slave in Egypt than to die in the desert.

Only in the desert, however, would they come to understand that everything they had—food, water, their very lives—was the gift of a gracious God. It was that God who offered them not merely a set of commandments but also life-giving relationship.

In today's gospel, we hear how Jesus was more than a bit disruptive, too. Families had been coming to Jerusalem for generations and buying animals for sacrifice at a market inside the temple. It was certainly easier than bringing them from their home village. By overturning the tables and driving out the animals, Jesus was—albeit temporarily—shutting down the temple, the place where God was believed to be most fully present on earth. It was a shocking act aimed at getting people to recognize that, in Jesus, God was doing something radically new.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in many ways. Families have lost loved ones and been unable to mourn them in the way they wish. Parents are trying to do their jobs and help their children with online school at the same time. Many of us have been working at home for a long time and those that aren't are taking greater risks on behalf of others. Churches are worshipping mainly on the web. It's been a hard year.

But like those little blades of grass that shoot up after a wildfire, there are also signs of hope in today's pandemic world. People are asking deep questions about the meaning and purpose of their lives; Communities are coming together

in new ways to help those in need. These are reminders that, even in the midst of great disruption, God is always with us and always working to bring good out of a bad situation. (*Deacon Peter Nixon*)