

Parish of Malin (Clonca)
Third Sunday in Lent

Sunday 7th March 2021
(Year B Week)



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Mass Times
St. Patrick's Church – No Mass
Star of the Sea Church – No Mass
St. Mary's Church – No Mass

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Facebook: Malin Parish

Details on the times of online Masses and Prayers for the Covid 19 Crisis: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie>

Sincere Thanks to those who have sent in their collection envelopes, cheques and donations for the Parish during the past week. Please make cheques payable to "Malin Parochial". New envelopes are available now January to June 2021 are now available in all churches and from Fr. Devlin. Please use these envelopes for your weekly contribution to the parish.

Parish Draw 2021-2022: Parish Draw Cards are now available from Fr. Devlin. **Returns to the Parochial House Malin on Monday 29th March at 8pm.** The first draw will be in April and the parish draw will run from April to April in future years. Sincere thanks to our promoters and members of the draw. It is an important part of parish fundraising.

Gospel John 2:13-25 Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

Interrupting Business as Usual

"But he was speaking of the temple of his body" (John 2:21). The religious people that day did not get that. They didn't understand that he was talking about the temple of his body because they were about business as usual. It was business as usual that day Jesus showed up at the temple. Animals were being bought and sold. Coins were being changed. All the usual people had their usual places and usual roles.

This is one of those stories that we need to set aside a couple of things, things don't belong, things that distract, before we can really understand what is happening. We need to set aside what we have often been told or thought this story is about so we can hear it again, maybe for the first time.

I don't think this story is simply about Jesus getting angry. Jesus got angry. I get angry. It's ok to get angry. That misses the point. There's more to this story than that. And I don't think it's about the animals or the moneychangers being in the temple. Jesus surely had to have known they were there. He grew up as a faithful Jew going to the temple. He didn't show up this day and say, "Wow! There are animals and moneychangers here. I didn't know this. This is wrong." The animals and moneychangers had always been there. That's how the system worked. It was business as usual for them to be there. Jesus went to the temple that day for one purpose; to throw out and overturn business as usual. There are times when we need the tables of our life overturned and the animals thrown out. It's just so easy to fall into the trap of business as usual.

Have you ever pushed the auto-pilot button and life became mechanical? You go through the motions. You show up but you're not really there. That's business as usual. How about this? Have you ever smiled that I'm-good-and-everything-is-fine smile but behind the smile there was an emptiness, you felt hollow, and your heart was breaking? That's carrying on with business as usual. Or maybe you wake up in the morning and you are as exhausted as you were when you went to bed the night before. Business as usual. Have you ever felt like you were just not yourself? Nothing seemed right? Boredom overcame creativity. There was no enthusiasm, wonder, or imagination. It was just business as usual. Sometimes we look at life and the world and it all seems in vain. We're busy but not really getting anywhere. There's no depth or meaning, only business as usual. Business as usual can happen anywhere: in friendships, marriages, parenting, work, church.

The things I just described are not, however, the problem. They are the symptom in the same way that the animals and moneychangers in the temple are not the problem. They are the symptoms of something deeper going on. The problem is not so much in the temple as it is in the human heart.

That deeper issue is, I think, what gives rise to business as usual. Sometimes it's about our fear. We're fearful about what is happening in our life or the uncertainty of the future and we want some type of security and predictability so we can keep on doing the same old things. Business as usual is predictable and steady but it creates only the illusion of security. Sometimes business as usual is a symptom of our grief and sorrow. Something has been lost. We can't get back the life we want so we cling to business as usual because it's familiar and we want some stability. Other times we are so busy and worn out making a living that life turns into one task after another, one appointment after another, a never ending to do list, and it's business as usual. Maybe we've taken people, relationship, and things for granted. Maybe we've lost our sense of gratitude, wonder, or mystery.

There are thousands of reasons and ways in which we fall into business as usual. There's one thing, however, that I keep coming back to. Forgetfulness. Business as usual is born of forgetfulness. We forget that we really are the temple of God's presence. We forget that all of creation is the residence of God. We forget that in whatever direction we might turn, there is the face of God gazing upon us. And as soon as we forget those things about ourselves, each other, or the world, life becomes business as usual.

I think that's what happened in the temple. They didn't see themselves or one another as the true temple of God. It was all about the human built temple, the animals, and the coins. They had forgotten that God was more interested in them than in their festivals and that God wanted them more than their offerings.

When we forget that we are the temple of God life can easily become a series of transactions. Relationships and intimacy are lost. Priorities get rearranged. Making a living replaces living a life. Life becomes a marketplace rather than a place for meeting the holy in ourselves and one another. And it's business as usual.

That's what Jesus is overturning and driving out of the temple. In the gospel according to St. John this happens at the very beginning of Jesus ministry. The Word became flesh (John 1:14), water became wine (John 2:9), and now the temple is becoming human. And it does not stop here. Throughout the rest of the gospel Jesus will be interrupting business as usual. Remember the Samaritan women at the well (John 4:4-26)? She's had five husbands and she's living with a man who is not her husband. Despite what we have done to her, that's not a statement about her. It's another manifestation of business as usual. Her first husband died, divorced her, or ran off. Who knows? What we do know is that it was improper and dangerous to be women without a man. Business as usual meant she had to belong to a man. So there was a second man, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth. Jesus meets this woman at the well and interrupts business as usual. It's not about the man or men in her life. It's about her. Jesus recognizes her as the temple of God. It's neither on this Samaritan mountain nor in Jerusalem. She is now the well of living water.

How about the man that spent thirty-eight years on a mat (John 5:1-9)? He was paralyzed and always trying to get into that pool of water that would heal him but someone always got there first. The same ground, the same mat, the same paralyzed legs, the same failed effort. It was thirty-eight years of business as usual. Then Jesus comes and says, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." And the man did. He rose up to a new life and business as usual had again been interrupted. And then there's Lazarus (John 11:1-44). He's been dead three days already. Martha knows the stench of death is present. Jesus tells her it will no longer be business as usual. "Take away the stone," he says. Death will not have the final word. "Lazarus, come out."

And let's not forget the five thousand people that show up empty and hungry (John 6:1-13). Philip is sure there's not enough. There's no way to feed them. Empty and hungry people are business as usual. But Jesus has other plans. Two fish and five loaves are more than enough. Everyone was satisfied and twelve baskets were filled with leftovers. It was not business as usual for the empty and hungry.

Over and over again Jesus is interrupting, disrupting, overturning, and throwing out business as usual. Business as usual is destructive of our lives and relationships. It destroys our ability see and participate in the holy that is already present in and among us. The Word became flesh so that the temple might become human. Jesus continues to overturn and throw out business as usual because the truth is there are still Samaritan women waiting at the well in our world today. There are still lame people grounded by business as usual. Empty and hungry people are still a reality in our world and there are dead people waiting to be made alive.

Maybe for you today this isn't about other people. Maybe you are the women at the well. Maybe you know what it's like to be grounded and paralyzed. Maybe you are empty and hungry today. Maybe you need to be called to life. Maybe business as usual needs to be interrupted in your life.

Regardless of who we are, what we've done or left undone, or how we see or judge our life, we are the temple of God and there is one who stands in the temple of our life interrupting business as usual. So tell me this. What does the temple of your life need today? What tables in your life need to be overturned? What animals need to be driven out? I am not asking about what needs to happen so that you can become holy or become the temple, but so you can see that you already are the temple and claim what is already yours. Jesus does not make us into something we were not. He calls us back to who we've always been.

He was speaking of the temple of our body.