

Thought for the week

3rd Sunday of Lent — 4th March 2018

Spring Cleaning

When put together, this week's readings from sacred scripture tell a story of the understanding of God's guidance for his people becoming cluttered and distorted over time. In the end, the baggage that has built up becomes part of an insurmountable obstacle preventing the acceptance of the crucified Christ and his message.

Over hundreds of years, the clarity of the Ten Commandments and the guidance in the other books of the Pentateuch became muddled by layers of additional ritual requirements and legalistic interpretations. The temple being full of money changers and sellers of animals for sacrifice are an example and a manifestation of this. When Jesus comes to the temple at this point in his ministry, he is so focussed on his mission and message that he has no choice but to clear them out.

In many ways, the Jews of New Testament times were no different to pre-reformation or pre-Vatican II Christians. Like them, they had built layers of interpretation and "custom and practice" that had obscured the core message of what God asks of his followers.

These people were not intrinsically bad, but were human in their faults and failings – just like us! To help us, we are given Lent as a time to re-examine ourselves, our personal faith and our habits. We have an opportunity to re-open our eyes to things that we have let grow up to obscure Christ's message of Love and our call to give and live that Love.

May we use the tools we are given: prayer, abstinence and almsgiving to help us spring clean our faith and our practices ready to celebrate joyfully the resurrection and to become again "Easter people".

A Parishioner