

Third Sunday in Lent, Gospel, Year B

THE MARKET CRASHES, CHRIST SERVES AS COLLATERAL

John 2:13-22

Third Sunday in Lent

Analysis by Mark Marius

13The Passover of the Jewish people was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" 17His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." 18The Judeans then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" 19Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20The Judeans then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body. 22After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Diagnosis: Market Driven

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Corrupting the System

A market economy is the only way to go because everyone profits. The seller makes money and the buyer makes the needed sacrifice. It's win-win, is it not? The law is fulfilled and the Passover

is kept. So what's the problem? Our focus is turned in on ourselves and away from worshiping God. And what's worse is that a market economy lends itself to corruption and exploitation while turning a profit.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): No Need for a New System

As long as people are willing to participate (or have the means to), the market economy flourishes. The more it flourishes, the less we acknowledge our unfaithfulness to God and our failing the true essence of God's law. Which, in turn, makes us less receptive to a bona fide savior. We tell ourselves we don't need Christ, nor do we need him to rebuild our temple. The temple will be completed through our own personal sacrifice.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Systems Fail

All markets crash. God sees through our actions of merely meeting an obligation and witnesses our lack of faith and trust in God. Not trusting God will lead to our destruction. The market and temple collapse leaving us "damn-aged" beyond repair.

Prognosis: Collateral Reparation

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Currency of Christ

As Jesus clears the temple he ensures that the barriers we create between ourselves and God have been driven away. Instead of making us pay for our faithlessness God chooses to give us the grace we need through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Christ becomes our temple as a new sign for God's faithfulness to us. And when Christ is raised the temple is razed no more. God's economy in Christ will never crash. Christ invests and we benefit.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis:(Internal Solution): Zeal Consumes Us

No longer do we need to use one another to profit. Having been given freedom through Christ, the Holy Spirit fills us with

zeal. Through our own rebuilding in the waters of baptism we seek to share Christ's sacrifice with the world. We give grace, love, and forgiveness to others as freely as we receive it.

Step 6: Final Prognosis: (External Solution): Giving and Building

Now instead of a marketplace the temple is for giving and building up. The body of Christ (the new name of the temple) is for building community and sharing all that God gives to us. Not because we are obliged, but because we are compelled. We welcome those who are shunned, those who are hungry, those who are hurting, those without a place to call home. And if anyone asks for a sign to understand why we are doing this, we show them the cross on our foreheads.