



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

Third Sunday of Lent

March 3, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

“To Be Cleansed by the Grace of God”

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

The account in John’s Gospel about the cleansing of the temple stirs our thoughts and imaginations about the chaos that Jesus created. Furious merchants, traders, and worshipers in the temple reacted to what Jesus did. But we cannot blame Him for why He reacted this way. Instead of making the temple a house of prayer, a place where they could encounter God, or a place to offer sacrifices to Him, merchants made the temple a place of business. Trade and commerce became the central activity in the temple. Chief priests and elders never bothered about it. As long as they receive the offerings of people, that should be enough for them. Jesus was enraged by the scene He saw. He made a whip out of cords, drove them all out of the temple area, spilled the coins of money changers, and overturned their tables. The reaction of Jesus was so evident in His care for the house of God. He wanted to purify the temple so that the people of Israel could carry out what true worship to God meant. True worship is not expressed with sacrifices or performing rituals but with a true spirit ready to offer their life to God in words and deeds.

The temple’s cleansing calls us to ponder on the things, values, attitudes, or even ideals that we need to change in our lives. Jesus set for us an example of what it means to be dedicated sons and daughters of God. His way of life should be our way of life, making our bodies and our lives, as St. Paul says, “temples of the Holy Spirit.” He offered Himself to His Father in humble surrender. He listened to the will of His Father. He carried out His mission truthfully and faithfully.

As we continue our journey in this season of grace, conversion, and spiritual rejuvenation, we ask ourselves what the things that need to be driven out from within us are. What is there to be cleansed for us to carry out our call as Disciples of Christ and Stewards of the Gospel? We take this opportunity to deepen our commitment to the Lord. Let us take away those that hinder us from our relationship with God. We offer our sacrifices to God with renewed faith and a deepened relationship filled with love and kindness.

Let us keep focusing on following the Commandments of God, for they lead our lives righteously. Through it, we are cleansed and become beloved children of God.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual