

## HOMILY 3<sup>RD</sup> SUN LENT YRB 2018

“There is no use reinventing the wheel.” Have you heard this saying before? People try reinventing the wheel all the time. The Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia, still gets hundreds of applications involving wheels every year. They have to review each of them to see if there is anything unique about them that would warrant a patent. The Office has only 3 examiners that review all of the applications involving wheels because they are so complicated. They have approved 30,000 patents involving wheels since 1790, so they have to know what all of these are to know if the new application is unique. They now have enough applications involving wheels to keep them busy for the next 17 years. We are not exactly sure who created the wheel, but the oldest wheel that has been found was discovered in Mesopotamia, today’s Iraq, 5,500 years ago. It has not really changed since then. It is very old, but it is still a very useful thing.

The Catholic Church has many teachings that are very old. We hear in the first reading about following the Ten Commandments. We received the Ten Commandments about 1,200 years before Christ. The Ten Commandments are old, but there is still great wisdom in them. The first 3 Commandments are all about having a right relationship with God and the next 7 are all about having a right relationship with each other. I want to talk briefly about the third Commandment, “Keep holy the Sabbath.” In his pastoral letter on evangelization, Archbishop Vigneron tells us that we should reclaim the Sabbath. There is a time that some of you will remember that pretty much everything was closed on Sunday. Most people went to church and then spent the day with family and close friends. Now I do not think we can go back to those times. I doubt that our culture will go back to closing everything on Sundays any time soon, but we do have a choice about how we spent our Sundays. I think we really need to make a

commitment to attend Mass every weekend, as a family if possible. What is going on in your life that is more important than God? I know there are some people who have to work on Sundays, your job may depend upon it, but we need to make the effort. And what is more important than spending time with family and close friends. Sharing a meal on Sundays with family and friends is a great tradition. Think about everything you do on Sundays and decide what is most important.

In the Gospel reading we see Jesus getting angry, which is not very characteristic of Jesus. But there is nothing sinful about our feelings, they just are. And anger, properly channeled, can be a great motivating force. Jesus is addressing the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment: “You shall not steal.” You see, the money changers and the vendors selling animals were providing a very useful service. Many people came to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and they wanted to pay the temple tax. However they could not pay the temple tax with Roman lira. They had to change it for shekels. And they needed animals for sacrifice. Since people were traveling a great distance for days, it was much easier to buy the animals in Jerusalem. So both of these services were good. However human nature being what it is, since they had the corner on the market, they started giving people an unfair exchange rate and they were charging ridiculous amounts for the animals. This really became stealing. Jesus anger, properly channeled, prevented people from being taken advantage of. Sometimes, things that start out good move into the sinful area without our being conscience of it. Lent is a good time to have a look at our lives and see if things have moved into the sinful area without you realizing it. You do not have to recreate the wheel. Have a fresh look at the 10 Commandments. Look at how you spend Sundays and see if you want to make some changes. Have some of the things we have been doing moved into the sin area?