

HOMILY 3rd SUNDAY of LENT

March 7, 2021

I was talking to a woman this week about her family. She told me that recently she decided “enough is enough.” She and her husband had been working from home, and her children had been attending classes online since March. Her kids needed help with their homework, but she and her husband could not do that during the day because they were working. Over the past year, they had lost patience with one another and stopped cooperating with one another more and more. There was a lot of yelling and bickering. The house was a mess. They were all slugging around in their pajamas most days. By the time each day was finished, they were sick of each other and locked themselves in separate rooms for the evening. One Saturday morning, she and her husband said “enough is enough.” This is going to be a cleaning day. Everyone is going to clean their own room and put everything away. Everyone is going to work together to clean the common areas and do all of the laundry. The day ended with pizza and a movie. Working together for a clean orderly house gave them a more positive attitude. They decided that dinner was going to be a “sacred time,” attendance was mandatory and everyone would share responsibility for preparing for dinner. This has not resolved all of the conflicts, but overall the whole atmosphere of their home is much better. Even during a pandemic, we have to be a family. Sometimes difficulties develop in our lives that were not intended, but there is a point at which you just have to say “enough is enough.”

I think that is where Jesus was in the Gospel reading today. He went to the temple in Jerusalem for Passover, and he could not believe what he found. The money changers that used to be scattered all over Jerusalem were now in the temple fighting for a prime position. The money changers were needed to change the Roman currency into currency that they could accept in the temple, but the money changers were giving a horrible exchange rate and cheating their captive audience. People all over Jerusalem used to sell animals that the people needed for sacrifice so they did not have to travel with animals. But now they were selling them in the temple and, not only animals, but everything under the sun. What used to be a house of prayer had now become a shopping mall. I think Jesus said “enough is enough” and decided to put a stop to it. People point to this Gospel as an example of Jesus acting out of anger, but I do not think it is that at all. It was the only way he could stop what was going on. He could not go to each individual and ask them to stop. With all of the pandemonium, he could not get their attention to give a speech. Jesus had a reputation by this time, and some thought he might be the Messiah. The people knew of the prophecy that the Messiah would purify the temple, so they were looking to Jesus for a sign of who he was. Jesus told them to destroy this temple and, in three days, he would raise it up. He was

speaking of the temple of his body, but the people thought he was speaking of the physical temple. The temple had been under construction for 46 years, so most of the people just dismissed Jesus. They were not going to destroy the temple and hope Jesus would rebuild it. They were content with things as they were.

Sometimes things slowly develop in our lives, and we do not know how we got there but we have ended up in a bad place. Lent is a time to look at our lives, be grateful for the things that are working and see what needs to change. In the First Reading today, we heard the Ten Commandments. That may be a good place to start. Maybe it is time to say “enough is enough.” A virus in addition to COVID-19 has infected our country in the form of racism, greed, prejudice, polarization and violence. It is easy to just blame this on someone else, but we are all responsible for fighting the virus. Our society is dependent upon all adults acting responsibly. We are all responsible. Just like fighting COVID-19, we all have to take responsibility for doing our part. I am trying to work on the polarity in our country. I am trying to listen to people with different points of view, not to change them, but to understand them. I am trying to find a common ground so that we can have an intelligent conversation. So what do you think? Is it time to say “enough is enough?” Is it time to let go and follow Jesus?