

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024; Lent 3. BCP Benefice Holy Communion  
Stonegrave.

During Lent, I have been emphasizing that this is a time for us to look at ourselves and re-examine where we are and who we are in terms of our journey faith. The Lent course, I am presenting is covering the same topics offering a time when we can go back to basics with each other and have a review and reflection of our faith. Last week I spoke about reflecting on what is meaningful in our lives.

Today in the Gospel we have heard the story of Jesus driving out the money changers from the Temple, who had turned it into a 'den of thieves.' The people that day didn't understand that he was talking about the temple of his body because they were going about their business as usual, animals were being bought and sold for sacrifice rituals; money was being changed, all the usual people had their usual places and roles.

This story is simply about Jesus getting angry; he was human. But there's more to this story than that, it's not about the animals or the moneychangers being in the Temple because Jesus would have known they were there because he grew up as a faithful Jew going to the temple. What is the point is that it was business as usual for them to be there. Today however, Jesus went to the temple for one purpose; to throw out and overturn the 'business as usual.'

The question for us all today therefore is this. Are there are times when we need the tables of our life overturned? Or is it just easier to carry on with our own business as usual?

Is it easier to push the auto-pilot button and let life become mechanical and go through the motions, to turn up but not be there? Have you ever smiled but behind the smile there was an emptiness, you felt hollow, and your heart was breaking? Or maybe you wake up in the morning and you are as exhausted as you were when you went to bed the night before. Have you ever felt like you were just not yourself and nothing seemed right, when boredom overcame

creativity; when there was no enthusiasm, wonder, or imagination. Sometimes we look at life and the world and it all seems in vain and we're neither busy or getting anywhere because there's no depth or meaning. But nonetheless, we carry on with our business as usual. It can take place anywhere: in friendships, marriages, parenting, work, or church.

The deeper issue is, what gives rise to business as usual? Sometimes it's about our fear about what is happening in our life, or the uncertainty of the future and we want some type of security and predictability so we can keep on doing the same old things. Business as usual is predictable and steady but it creates only the illusion of security. Sometimes it is a symptom of our grief and sorrow or something we have lost. We can't get back the life we want so we cling to business as usual, because it's familiar and we want some stability. Other times we are so busy and worn out making a living that life turns into one task after another, one appointment after another, a never ending to do list, business as usual but in so doing, losing our sense of gratitude, wonder, and thanksgiving for the gifts God gives us in abundance.

Lent is a time to allow Jesus to disrupt, overturn, and throw out the 'business as usual' in our lives and enable us to re-connect again and participate in the holy that is already present in and among us, to discard the 'business as usual' fear and entrapment, and allow Him to bring us life in its fullness, the deep experience of joy that comes from the never-ending gift of God's love that is new every morning.

Thanks be to God.