

On this Sunday Jesus, propelled by zeal for his Father's house, purges the Temple of the corrupt practices that were polluting it: "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" (John 2:16). How are we to understand Jesus' actions. Is he simply calling us to a renewed reverence for our places of worship?

While this is undoubtedly true, I would suggest that the actions of Jesus point to a deeper reality. As Sacred Scripture teaches: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16). And again, "... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit we become, individually and collectively, God's Temple. It is in this light that we must consider the actions of Jesus. Jesus is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) who, through his love and his forgiveness, overturns and drives out that which is corrupt within us... our sins: "... though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Jesus does this first through Baptism and then through the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Catechism teaches: "The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptised is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ" (Catechism n. 1279)

For our part, we must work out our salvation "with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). We must turn away from our sin, embrace his forgiveness and believe in his gospel. It is in this

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way that we become true worshipers who, “worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:23). And it is in this way that we will come to practice true religion: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1:27).