

God would save Israel and bring to nothing the “wisdom of the wise” and the “discernment” (intelligence) “of the discerning”. From other sources, we know that there were many “wise” citizens of Corinth, each of whom had their own solutions to the world’s problems. The Greek philosopher and the Jewish scribe count as nothing before God, Paul says: God’s wisdom is different: you can’t “know” (v. 21) it in a philosophical way. Knowing God is an experiential matter in which one renders him homage and obeys his will. Jews and Greeks seek knowledge in their cultural ways (v. 22), but we proclaim something different: to those Jews and “Greeks” (v. 24, non-Jews) who are called, the cross makes much sense: he is God’s power working in the world; he shows us God’s intentions for humankind. God’s ways are not human ways (v. 25).

**John 2:13-22**

Perhaps John contrasts “the Passover of the Jews” with the sacrifice of our “paschal lamb, Christ” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus, as did many Jews, goes “up to Jerusalem” for the feast. In the forecourt of the Temple, he finds merchants selling animals and birds for sacrifices, and money changers exchanging coins bearing idolatrous images for coins used to pay the temple tax. Jesus throws both traders and animals out of the temple precincts, insisting that commercial activities (especially shady ones) have no place here (v. 16). (V. 19 may show that Jesus also speaks against the regulation of the Jewish sacrificial system by the religious authorities: it oppressed most people and enriched the traders and money changers.) Note that Jesus claims that God is his Father and sees the Temple as worthy of respect. The disciples recall Psalm 69:9 – here a prophecy that Jesus’ “zeal” (v. 17) will lead to his death. The religious leaders (“Jews”, v. 18) ask Jesus what authority he has for his (violent) action; his reply (v. 19) is puzzling and perhaps evasive, challenging them to replace temple worship with belief in him. Lacking faith, they take it literally (and misunderstand), but John tells us that Jesus is saying that, by his resurrection (“three days”) he will become a new spiritual temple, replacing the Temple. The disciples only understand this after the first Easter. It helps them to believe in Jesus and his message of good news.

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**Prayers** - If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com) or call me on 065 672 4721.

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**2021 Mission Charities** - Women’s Aid gives support and sanctuary to women and children suffering from domestic abuse - which has sadly greatly increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. Jigsaw supports young people who are struggling with their wellbeing and mental health.

**Womens Aid**

[www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

**Jigsaw**

[www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie)

See the diocesan website for the Bishop’s address:

<http://www.limerick.anglican.org>



## 3rd Sunday of Lent (Year B)

**Collect** Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what

harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Suggested Hymns** - *For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.*

1) All my hope on God is founded

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

2) Lord thy Word abideth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcghwj7zZZg>

3) O worship the King all—glorious above

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv2BqFqm6\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv2BqFqm6_M)

4) Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U4IMtvp6bg>

**Exodus 20: 1-17**

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

- You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

- You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

- Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

- Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

- You shall not murder.

- You shall not commit adultery.

- You shall not steal.

- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

- You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

**Psalms 19**

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;

yet their voice goes out through all the earth,

and their words to the end of the world.  
 In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,  
 which comes out like a bridegroom  
 from his wedding canopy,  
 and like a strong man runs its course with joy.  
 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
 and its circuit to the end of them;  
 and nothing is hidden from its heat.  
 The law of the Lord is perfect,  
 reviving the soul;  
 the decrees of the Lord are sure,  
 making wise the simple;  
 the precepts of the Lord are right,  
 rejoicing the heart;  
 the commandment of the Lord is clear,  
 enlightening the eyes;  
 the fear of the Lord is pure,  
 enduring for ever;  
 the ordinances of the Lord are true  
 and righteous altogether.  
 More to be desired are they than gold,  
 even much fine gold;  
 sweeter also than honey,  
 and drippings of the honeycomb.  
 Moreover by them is your servant warned;  
 in keeping them there is great reward.  
 But who can detect their errors?  
 Clear me from hidden faults.  
 Keep back your servant also from the insolent;  
 do not let them have dominion over me.  
 Then I shall be blameless,  
 and innocent of great transgression.  
 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
 be acceptable to you,  
 O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

### **I Corinthians 1: 18-25**

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,  
 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
 and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'  
 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe?  
 Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

### **John 2: 13-22**

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?'

But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

### **Commentary**

#### **Exodus 20:1-17**

The giving of the Ten Commandments marks the starting point of Israel as a self-defining community. They form a covenant between God and Israel but, unlike God's agreements with Noah and Abraham, here both parties have a stake in it, and either can break it. (In the earlier covenants, God acts and promises but the recipients passively receive – although they do have obligations.)

Having arrived at Mount Sinai, the Israelites clean themselves physically and ritually, but it is Moses and Aaron who ascend the mountain. God speaks to all, to the whole community. But why does God enter into the agreement? In 19:3-6, Moses is told that he has seen what God did to the Egyptians, and how he has lovingly protected Israel, that "you shall be for me a ... holy nation." They are to have "no other gods before [or beside] me" (v. 3). In the ancient Near East, people commonly encountered gods in sculpted images, but the Israelites are not to do this (v. 4), because God is different: he demands loyalty to him alone (v. 5); he punishes for a long time those who intentionally "reject" him, but rewards with compassion those who love him and follow his ways. Those who use God's name for a false or evil purpose (e.g. for casting spells, doing magic) will not be acquitted (v. 7) or held harmless. Each week, time is to be reserved for praying to, and worshipping, God. The Israelites must honour older people; doing so will contribute to their own longevity. Then vv. 13-17: life, marriage and property are sacred. Testifying falsely against another (or even spreading innuendos) is prohibited. Even coveting, desiring greatly, the possessions of others is prohibited.

#### **Psalm 19**

To the Israelites, the "firmament" was a giant inverted pudding bowl over the earth, beyond which was a hierarchy of "heavens". God's glory is told "day" (v. 2) and "night", yet silently (v. 3a), to all people. He has created the sun as his agent (v. 5); it rises early in the morning, as does the "bridegroom" from his night's rest, traverses from one edge of the heavens to the other, making God's presence known with its "heat" (v. 6). Vv. 7-9 present the wonders of the law, as an expression of God's will for Israel. Here we find synonyms for the Law, characteristics of it, and its benefits for humankind, e.g. it makes "wise the simple", those immature in understanding and judgement. It warns the psalmist ("servant", v. 11). If he accidentally break it ("hidden faults", v. 12), may God forgive him. May God protect him from those who intentionally go against God's ways ("the insolent", v. 13), lest he be influenced into sinning intentionally ("great transgression"). May his words and his thoughts be acceptable to God, who restores him to godliness (v. 14).

#### **1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

Having heard that there are "quarrels" (v. 11) among Christians at Corinth, Paul has urged them to be "united in ... mind and ... purpose." (v. 10) Some claim allegiance to him, others to Apollos, to Cephas, or to Christ. He is thankful that he baptised very few there, because "no one can say that you were baptised in my name" (v. 15), for Christ sent him to Corinth to "proclaim the gospel ..." (v. 17).

Divisions within the Church should be avoided, but between believers and others they are legitimate. Now v. 18: the message of the cross makes sense to the faithful: to us, it is the revelation of God's power, but to others, it is nonsense ("foolishness", vv. 18, 21). In v. 19, Paul recalls a verse from Isaiah referring to events that occurred when Assyria was threatening Judah. The king's counsellor (a "wise" man, one versed in popular philosophy) advised alliance with Egypt, but Isaiah told the king to do nothing but trust in the Lord: