

A LETTER FROM FATHER DANIEL CARUSO

4/6/2020

Dear Friends,

Today is Holy Monday. As St. Mark records the events of that first Holy Week, this is the day that Jesus drove the money changers from the Temple. I think most of us are familiar with that event, but perhaps we fail to recognize its significance, for Jesus and for us.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all place this event sometime at the beginning of that first Holy Week. Jesus' actions in the Temple that day were a direct attack on the religious structures of that time. The leaders saw this as a threat. It was the deciding factor in their decision to have Jesus killed. What exactly happened that day? In the outermost courtyard of the temple, people could purchase animals to be sacrificed. Only a certain currency could be used for these purchases. The money changers would exchange people's currency for the currency accepted at the Temple. They made a profit on this and there were times that they took advantage of the people coming to the Temple to make an offering; this was especially true of poor people who could only afford to purchase a dove to be sacrificed. Jesus, in overturning the tables of the money changers, was not only defending the dignity of the Temple but also of the poor.

As we walk with Jesus this Holy Week, I invite each of us to stop and think about that. It is a challenge to us to treat our Church buildings with respect, but it is so much more. The world we are in often teaches us to be selfish; to put ourselves before others. If we can get something out of somebody else that would "enrich" us, this world tells us that we should do it, even if it is taking advantage of another person. Too often we fall into this behavior because we look to the world for guidance instead of to Jesus.

How we respond to the current crisis will help us to see if we are following Jesus or following the world. The poor are not just those who lack financial resources; the poor are all who are in need. If we are truly seeking to follow in Jesus' footsteps this Holy Week, then we need to be open to helping those who are in need. Jesus sacrificed His life because He sought to defend them; the question we have to ask ourselves is: "What will I sacrifice?"

Let us continue to support one another in love and in prayer.

In Christ, Fr. Caruso