Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 2:13–25: Cleansing of the Temple

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Background information:

The animals that were being sold in the Temple area were the kinds of animals the Jewish people offered as sacrifice in the Temple. At certain times of year, the Jews were required to offer an animal sacrifice to God, according to Jewish law. People from all over the world came to the Temple to worship God and to offer sacrifice. The people selling animals for sacrifice could charge whatever they wanted for the animals. Sometimes people could not afford an animal and were unable to offer sacrifice. The sellers had turned the act of worship into a business and made money off of the people. The same was true of the money changers. They would charge people a fee to change foreign money into the form of money that was accepted in the Temple area.

Being angry is not a sin. Anger is an emotion and all emotions are neither morally good nor morally sinful. It is what we do with an emotion that gives it a moral quality, either good or sinful. Sometimes anger can cause us to act righteously when we encounter something that is unjust or evil.
1. What did Jesus find in the Temple when He went there for Passover?

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2. What did Jesus do in response to what He found in the Temple?

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3. What did Jesus tell these people as He did this?

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4. What sign did Jesus promise the people? What was He really talking about?

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5. At the end of this Gospel, what do we learn that Jesus understood?

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6. Why do you think Jesus’ actions in this Gospel were not sinful?

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Spring Cleaning

For many households, spring is a time for cleaning. The house has been closed up all winter and is in need of fresh air. We remove, donate, put away, or throw out that which we no longer need, that which has grown old or stale, or that which we won’t need until next winter. We open the windows to let the sun and air in. As the snow melts and the spring plants start to grow, we wash away the winter grime, and, like nature itself, start the season fresh and renewed. Cleaning, however, isn’t always fun. It takes hard work. It is dirty, and smelly. But, it is necessary. And the end result is always more satisfying than where we started.

Lent is a sort of spiritual spring cleaning. This week’s Gospel helps us to remember that our spiritual lives need a freshening up from time to time. Sometimes we need to let go of past hurt in our lives and forgive those who have harmed us. Sometimes we need to remove obstacles that are standing in our way of having a better relationship with God. Sometimes we need to pray more or differently in order to let the “fresh air” of God’s grace into our lives.

Remember the three pillars of our Lenten journey: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. These three practices are the perfect way to begin our spiritual spring cleaning.

1. What are two obstacles in your life that are making it harder for you to have a better relationship with God? What is one thing you can do to begin to overcome each of them?

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2. Think about someone you need to forgive for hurting you. Without naming them, write a brief prayer below asking God to give you the strength and courage to forgive them.

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3. How has your Lenten fast been going so far this Lent? Have you been successful in your fasting? How has it been difficult to fast? What can you do to recommit (if necessary) to your Lenten fast?

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4. How have you helped others so far this Lent? In what ways can you continue to help others in the time remaining this Lent?

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5. Remember, prayer is entering into relationship with God – by talking to Him, letting Him talk to you, and by listening to Him. How would you describe your current relationship with God? What are two things you can do this week to improve your relationship with God?

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