

Third Sunday of Lent B - 2018
Exodus 20.1-17///1 Corinthians 1.22-25///John 2.13-25

→this past week I had the opportunity to hear confessions on two different occasions....one was at JFK High School and the other was this past Wednesday...as our diocese celebrated an “Evening of Reconciliation”

→inevitably...it never surprises me that many people when they come to confession will confess that one of their sins was that they got “angry”

→it can be anywhere from high schoolers to senior citizens and everywhere in between....

→....they will say..."I want to confess that I got angry with my husband" or "I got angry with my wife" or "I got angry with my children" or “I got angry with my parents or with my brothers and sisters or my friends or my classmates

→sometimes....it will be worded.... in a more defensive tone: "my husband makes me so angry!" or "my wife makes me so angry" or “my parents make me so angry.”

→and what amazes [surprises] me about all of this.....is that most of us assume that “anger” is a sin

→let me ask you...is “anger” a sin? ...we just heard in the first reading from Exodus the 10 commandments, I didn't hear anything about anger did you...there wasn't a commandment that said...thou shalt not get angry" was there?

---well [believe it or not]---there is no such commandment because

→we only sin when we decide to do something wrong...and anger is an emotion ...not a decision

→[think about it for a moment].....nobody ever decides to be angry do they?

→...you don't wake up in the morning and say..."today I'm going to be happy until noon, then I am going to be angry for two hours, and then I'll be happy again!" do you?

---of course not....[you see] it doesn't work that way; emotions --any emotion we have
----sweeps over us like the changing weather or like water over a cliff...

→we can't predict them or control them...in essence our emotions just happen

----and if anger is an emotion; ---///---the logical conclusion is that it is not a sin

→**and** if anger is not a sin....then is it possible for "anger" to be a good thing if used correctly...if understood properly...if controlled proportionately?

→[let me ask]...is it possible for anger (like all of our other emotions as well) to be used as a motivational force that gets our adrenaline flowing and gives us the courage to do whatever needs to be done?...that gives us energy to stand up for what is right...that gives us power to embrace what we believe in////////

--of course it's possible.....

→ think of the students in Florida right now....

→they are angry at what happened at their school....

→are they committing a sin because they are angry....or are they channeling their emotion and using it as a motivational force with the hope of getting something changed about the availability of guns in our society....

PAUSE

----you see.....there is a difference between the type of anger that makes us feel guilty ----and the anger that can be productive and dynamic

--and the difference is in.....what we do with it and how we handle it

→in today's gospel.....this difference is quite evident....

→we hear about Jesus getting angry....purifying the temple...and driving out the moneychangers....he is quite angry

→but as we see.....the anger Jesus exhibits is not an evil anger but rather a healthy anger

----Jesus is uses his anger to motivate his disciples and the people of his day into action

→to make his disciples and people aware of what needs to be done, of what is needs to happen...of what they need to be about

[→similar to the students in Florida and in other parts of our country today]

→...rather than allowing **his anger** to overcome and use him...Jesus **uses** his anger to nudge his disciples into understanding, to open their eyes....to realize what is right and good

PAUSE

→[surprisingly]....the anger Jesus exhibits today is a good thing

→...it is certainly not a sin but in a strange way it is a blessing because it motivates the disciples and followers of Jesus to open their eyes and realize what their "faith in God"

→what "their faith in this person Jesus"

→and "what their beliefs"

→what "their responsibility and duty is as follower of Christ" were all about

PAUSE

---now some of you may be thinking....yes but... didn't Jesus say "blessed are the peacemakers, and "blessed are the poor in spirit"....and my answer would be yes...he very well did

→but he also said..."I came not to bring peace, but division....because of me...and what I teach...because of your faith in God and in me...there will be division among you...you will be persecuted because of me...and ultimately you will need to give up your life for me.

---the fact of the matter is....is that the world we live in today is a battle field between the forces of good and evil....and it seems as if....with all that is going on in the world the forces of evil seem to be winning the battle

---and that should make us angry

→that is what made Jesus angry in the Gospel today

→and if “**evil**” as it exists in our world today....doesn’t make you angry, then something is terribly terribly wrong...

→and unfortunately that seems to be the case with so many people these days

→.....there seems to be this wholesale contempt for human life...with all the violence and terror and shooting and everything else that is happening

→that –I have to wonderto some extent—if we have surrendered our values and morals, our beliefs and faith....

→and if that is case....**that** should make us angry!

→this is probably going to be one of the strangest things you will ever hear...but I am beginning to feel that we need more anger in this world, not less

---more anger from good people willing to stand up for what is right, motivating others to return to doing what is right and acceptable

---[we need] more anger from good people willing to stand up for what they believe in and have faith in.....rather than just turning their heads and saying nothing

---more anger from good people proclaiming and living the faith we profess each week rather than remaining passive or non-responsive

--[and we need]---more anger from good people so that we can begin to counteract the evil that seems to have taken hold of our world and society so that we can return back to the morals and values that we believe in

→let me ask you...when something happens in our world, in our society, in our community that is wrong, that contradicts the values and morals we profess, that goes against our faith and beliefs in the goodness of people...what should happen?

→should we pretend that we are not angry...do nothing and overlook it...

→---or on the other hand...if we react [to the opposite end of the spectrum] like some and get instantly 100% angry, cuss and swear and slam the door, kick the dog and do a bunch of other idiotic things to vent but do nothing else to effect a change, nothing else to be converted....what good is that

---BUT [however].....if you say to yourself..."that really makes me angry," and this is what I am going to do....to bring about change, to recapture what we should be about, to rediscovery what we have been put on this earth for

→then God bless you...you've got courage...you've got Spirit...you've got the message

→and you.....can get angry anytime you want.