

**Homily — Third Sunday in Lent (B), 2018
by Fr. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says:

**"You have heard the commandment, 'You shall not commit murder;
every murderer shall be liable to judgement.'**

**What I say to you is: everyone who grows angry with a brother or sister
shall be liable to judgement;**

**anyone who uses abusive language toward another
shall be answerable to the Sanhedrin."**

Our first reading was an enunciation of what we call the 10 Commandments.

In a sense, the commandments are God's instruction manual

for living a healthy, happy life here with one another.

Rather than being restrictions,

the commandments are descriptions

of how to live a wholesome, holy life

in a community God has called into freedom.

The commandments are our best assurance

against becoming slaves again in some Egypt

or any other repressive regime, ideology or way of thinking.

The commandments are our assurance of remaining free.

But wait!

Doesn't today's Gospel story contradict

what Jesus says about anger

being contrary to the commandment not to kill?

He's angry enough to drive out the sellers of oxen, sheep and doves.

He's angry enough to overturn the money-changers tables.

As it turns out those sellers and money-changers

are profiteering at the expense of the poor –

the very people who have a special place in the heart of God.

Jesus is teaching by his action

that not all anger is sinful,

that sometimes anger can be righteous.

Some Bible scholars suggest that Jesus' action in today's Gospel story

is a piece of street theater.

Jesus is acting out God's rejection of religious practice

that is anything less than an expression of love.

In doing so Jesus is putting his life on the line

for the sake of God's love for those who are being exploited

by the religious establishment.

What is really implied in our regularly signing ourselves with the CROSS?

You might want to think about that this week.

We sign ourselves with the cross twice at each Mass.

Sometimes it can be done pretty mindlessly

It implies:

**A willingness to go where Jesus has gone, to do what Jesus has done
for the sake of those who are being used**

by systems that turn money into a god, into idolatry.

Ultimately, in some way, shape or form, our lives lead to the cross.

"Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

but we proclaim Christ crucified,

a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles

but to those who are called,

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."