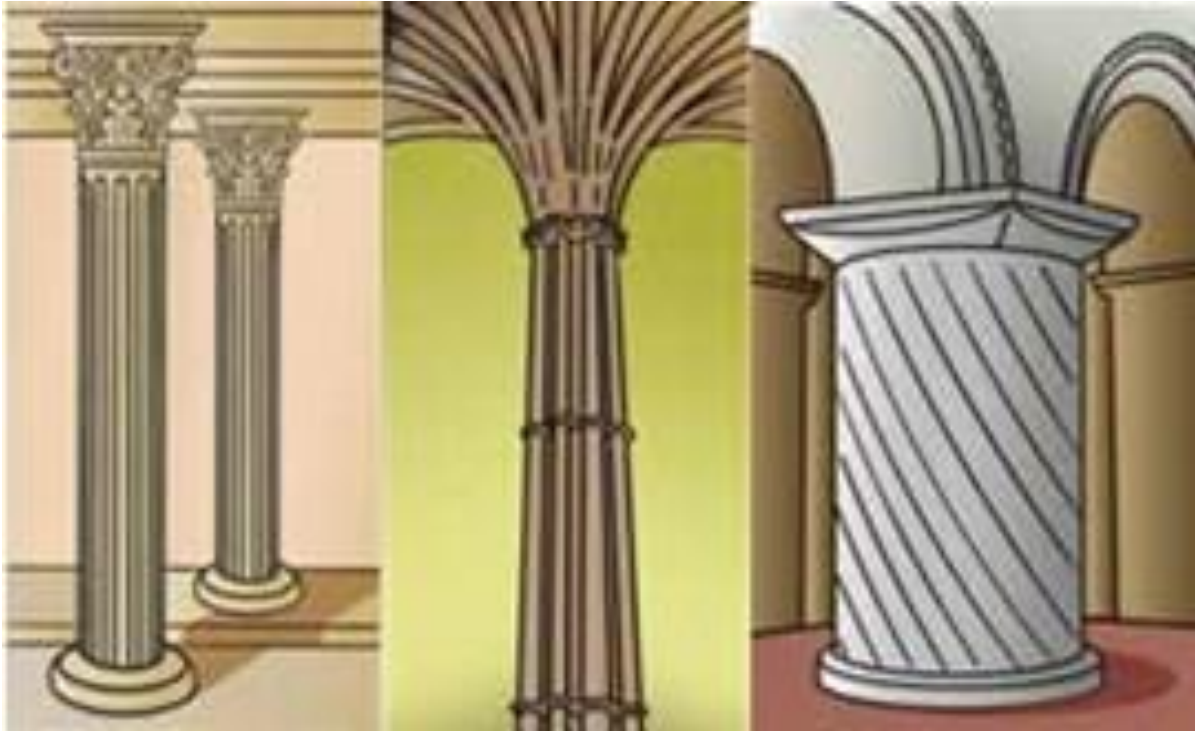


Resources on the Sunday Readings – Lent 3

Picture Reflection (p1), Bible Reading & Study Questions (p2)

See separate families' sheet.

Picture Reflection



Under Construction - John 2: 13-22

The Temple was a very special place of worship for the Jewish people ...it was believed to be a place where heaven touched earth, but Jesus shocked people when he spoke of destroying it and rebuilding it in three days. What they didn't realise was that he was speaking of his body rather than the physical Temple.

- Spend a few minutes with this picture....where have you seen pillars like these? What is special for you in the places where they are found?
- Think about the pillars in our own church building...what are they there for? What type of pillar are you?
- During the pandemic we have re-discovered that the Church is so much more than the church building, but what is St. James' church building to you?
- In our church community what, or who, holds things together...are some of us purely decorative?...do some of us get in the way?
- If Jesus came to our church community and looked at our lives, is there anything he would want to get rid of or encourage us to do more?

Bible Study Questions.

Bible Reading: John 2:13-22

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. 15 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. 16 He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' 18 The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' 19 Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' 20 The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' 21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22 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.

- It was entirely usual for there to be lots of animals for sale in the temple as people worshipped by offering a sacrifice and especially at a festival time this would have been very important. The temple had its own currency so to buy an animal to sacrifice you had to change your roman coins to temple currency, so money-changes needed to be there for this purpose. So why do you think Jesus drives them all out and stops the usual practices of Temple purification? And in such a dramatic way too!
- Jesus has travelled to Jerusalem to prepare for the important Jewish Festival of Passover (along with many, many other pilgrims) and he goes to the temple as part of that preparation. What do you think he was hoping to find there? How can sacred buildings help our faith? What do you hope to find in a church?
- Jesus takes time to make a whip of cords to use which suggests this is a thought through action on his part to make a powerful statement. Jesus often uses iconic gestures – riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, washing his disciple's feet. It's a powerful way to communicate. What iconic gestures can you think of in today's world? What iconic gestures could the church use today to communicate faith and Jesus' teaching?
- Jesus words in verse 16 suggest he was angry. What can we learn from his anger? Do you feel surprised or uncomfortable with Jesus being angry?
- What does this reading tell us about who Jesus is?
- This event happens shortly before Jesus is crucified in the other three gospels. But in John's gospel it happens near the very beginning of Jesus ministry, after Jesus has done his first sign by turning water to wine at the wedding in Cana. Does including this event at a different point in the narrative change its significance and meaning at all? Does it matter that the chronology in the gospels is different?