

**March 7, 2021**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

Ex 20:1-17 or

Ex 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17

1 Cor 1:22-25

Jn 2:13-25

**GROW:** We have rules in our house. Every family does. “No back talk. Do your chores. Bedtime. Curfews. Respect one another. Be kind.” Rules bring order out of chaos, forge a shared identity, and set standards to which everyone is held. Not surprisingly, life in God’s family has rules, too. Hence the Ten Commandments, which we hear today. They begin with these words: “I, the Lord, am your God.” If we miss that line, we miss the point of the rules – of the law. God’s law is about God’s love. Through his laws, God taught the Israelites a new way to live based on God’s values: humility, justice, love, sacrifice, simplicity, kindness, and mercy – values they rarely saw when enslaved in Egypt. This Lent, we give thanks to God for the law of love and we pray to grow in this love, and be strengthened in virtue.

**GO:** Today’s Gospel reminds me of the time my older son once helped his younger brother understand the rules of a game we were playing. He did so by showing his own cards, which meant he would lose that round. While not done under the same circumstances, or with the same anger with which Jesus cleansed the temple, my older son did what he did for the same reason and with the same effect: love. When Jesus cleansed the temple, he did so out of love: love for God the Father, and love for those being exploited by the marketers. We have an opportunity this Lent to witness to this same love of Christ by putting the needs of others first. Sure, our kids demand our time, energy, and resources. Our spouses and parents sometimes do, too. To follow Christ means to choose to sacrifice for others with love, not simply because it has to be done. Christ infused the world with love through his sacrifice. We have the opportunity to be Christ today when we make our sacrifices out of love.

**ACTIONS:** Read the Ten Commandments this week and imagine God giving you all the wisdom you could ever want in those rules. Think about the chaos those rules have protected you from in your life. Imagine telling your loved ones how to find happiness by following the way God guarantees will lead to joy. (Read John 3:16)