

## Monday of Holy Week

The Monday of Holy Week is the day when Jesus overturned the money stalls in the Temple, called it a house of prayer for the nations, healed the sick and praised the children who sang to him.

This is how Matthew records it:

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, "It is written,

'My house shall be called a house of prayer';

but you are making it a den of robbers."

The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?'"

He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there. *Matthew 21:12-17*

### Reflection:

It was on Monday that religion got in the way.

An outsider would have thought that it was a pet shop's fire sale. And the outsider, in some ways, wouldn't have been far wrong. Only, it wasn't household pets, it was pigeons that were being purchased. And it wasn't a fire sale; it was a rip-off stall in the holy temple bartering birds for sacrifice. And the price was something only the rich could afford. No discounts for students, pensioners, those on social security.

Then he, the holiest man on earth, went through the bizarre bazaar like a bull in a china shop. So the doves got liberated and the pigeon sellers got angry. And the police went crazy and the poor people clapped like mad, because he was making a sign that God was for everybody, not just for those who could afford him. He turned the tables on Monday ... the day that religion got in the way.

### A Prayer of Confession:

If we have used your house for our purposes as if you did not mind or it did not matter, Lord, forgive us.

If we have cosseted your house in tradition, rather than hallowed it by prayer, Lord, forgive us.

If we have made it a house for one nation, or part of a nation, or for part of the Church, Lord, forgive us.

And if we can see clearly the misuse others make of your house and are blind to our own malpractices, Lord, forgive us.

Kindle in us and in all your people the desire to make all your sanctuaries the shop windows of heaven, rather than religious theme parks of earth. We ask this for your own name's sake. Amen.

**A Prayer for Ourselves and Others:**

On the Monday of Holy Week, the crippled and the blind came to Jesus in the Temple and he healed them. So let us pray for those who are crippled by disease or anxiety. You are invited to pause and pray in your own words following each intercession.

We pray for those who are crippled in body or in mind or in spirit;

...those who are blind to beauty, love and peace;

...those who are blind to what they must do now or do next;

...the church in places where it has the possibility of healing the wounds of the nations;

...and for ourselves we pray, that we may discern a clear vision of your kingdom; and that we may steadily walk your path, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Some resources have been used from Stages on the Way from the Iona Community*