



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 11:11-26.

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple area. He looked around at everything and, since it was already late, went out to Bethany with the Twelve. The next day as they were leaving Bethany he was hungry. Seeing from a distance a fig tree in leaf, he went over to see if he could find anything on it. When he reached it he found nothing but leaves; it was not the time for figs. And he said to it in reply, "May no one ever eat of your fruit again!" And his disciples heard it. They came to Jerusalem, and on entering the temple area he began to drive out those selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. He did not permit anyone to carry anything through the temple area. Then he taught them saying, "Is it not written: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples'? But you have made it a den of thieves." The chief priests and the scribes came to hear of it and were seeking a way to put him to death, yet they feared him because the whole crowd was astonished at his teaching. When evening came, they went out of the city. Early in the morning, as they were walking along, they saw the fig tree withered to its roots. Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus said to them in reply, "Have faith in God. Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him. Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions."

Mark 11:11-26.

Introductory Prayer:

Once again, Lord, I come to you to pray. Even though I cannot see you, I trust that you are present and want very much to instruct me in your teachings. In the same way you demonstrate your love me by spending this time with me, I want to express my love for you by dedicating this time with you in a spirit of faith, confidence and attention. Here I am, Lord, to listen to you and respond with love.

Petition:

Lord Jesus help me to learn how to unite prayer and action.

1. Jesus and the Fig Tree:

We witness Jesus withering a barren fig tree right down to its roots even though he knows that it is not the time for harvesting figs. Jesus never worked a miracle for himself, so we know it was not a punishment for not satisfying his hunger. This event immediately precedes his entering the Temple at Jerusalem where he expects to find people “busy about his Father’s affairs.” Instead he finds them occupied in worldly activity, and often fraudulent and unjust activity at that. The fruits of honesty and uprightness that Jesus expects to find are simply not there; so in a sense the fig tree symbolizes Jerusalem. Am I honest in my dealings with others? Do I realize that the Lord expects me to bear fruit? Do I invest my time well, in both prayer and action, to this end?

2. All in a Day’s Work:

This Gospel passage would make for a good documentary on a day in the life of Christ. He starts out early from Bethany to Jerusalem, he enters the Temple, faces the wrath of those there as he cleanses it, and then teaches for the rest of the day before returning to Bethany late in the evening. The very next day he begins his ministry again by teaching on the importance of faith in prayer. Jesus did not waste a second of his day; rather, he went about fulfilling his Father’s will. Still, Jesus was not a busybody. He did not generally meddle in others’ affairs, but he certainly was not about to allow worldly activity of a dishonest nature in his Father’s house. And so he throws the dishonest merchants out of Temple. Do I use my time well? Does that include the time I dedicate to prayer? Do I always act respectfully in God’s house where my Eucharistic Lord dwells?

3. Praying with Faith:

Prayer and action are intimately tied together. Jesus was right in driving the moneychangers and animals from the Temple. Certainly we’re not supposed to busy ourselves with worldly affairs while we’re in church. But it’s very proper to bring our worries and concerns, our joys, successes and failures to Christ in prayer. It’s good for us to ask Our Lord his viewpoint about our concerns and ask for his grace to continue on. And when we do set aside time specifically for prayer to encounter Christ, then we find the strength and desire to spread his message to others. It’s through prayer that we’re filled with apostolic zeal. When we dedicate our day to loving service of God, our day itself becomes a prayer. Is my prayer the source of interior strength, and is my action a loving prayer?

Conversation with Christ:

My Jesus, you ask much of me, but you are always at my side assisting me with your grace and presence. Help me to use my time wisely on behalf of your Kingdom.

Resolution:

I will program five extra minutes of prayer today for the sake of serving Christ better.