**Lent = Spring Cleaning**

Every human life has only so much space and so many hours. Let nature take its course, and the bad will crowd out the good, or the good will crowd out the best. At some point, we have to take charge of our own lives, decide what is really important, hold on to that, and throw the rest away. As the days go by, excess baggage tends to accumulate. Because it does, every life needs an occasional spring cleaning.

The deplorable practice that Jesus drove out of the temple probably started out serving a useful purpose. Pilgrims came to the Passover from faraway places. They needed sacrificial animals to fulfill the requirements of Jewish law. It was a convenience, if not a necessity, to have them available in the Temple area. But then, someone saw an opportunity to make money. Profits rather than service became the primary purpose. A once useful practice had gone sour and cried out for correction. When Jesus could tolerate it no longer, he drove them out of the Temple.

Decay and disintegration are an inherent part of this present world order. Food left in the refrigerator, usually spoils. Truths that are never renewed can become falsehoods. Virtues left unexamined can become vices. Parents can start off loving their children and end up dominating their lives. Disciples can start out eagerly searching for the truth and end up ostracizing everyone who holds a different point of view. We live in that kind of world. Good things go bad and must be thrown away. Ideas become outmoded and must be left behind.

Today’s reading from John’s Gospel places the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of our Lord’s public ministry; the other Gospels place it toward the end. Some scholars argue that these are two accounts of the same event set in different chronologies. Others contend that he cleaned the Temple twice. I do not know which is correct. I do know that we never get through sweeping up and throwing away. Rubbish accumulates, good things can go bad. Every life needs a periodic spring cleaning.

*Lent and Life Call for Good Deeds*