

November 9, 2014 (32nd Sun.) *Dedication of the Lateran Basilica*, Jn. 2:13-22, by r. j. tusky

1st, I want to share with you what our Church-Official Directory to all Roman Catholic priests for daily liturgies & the Office, called the *ORDO*, says about today's feast day of the Lateran Basilica: (read from the Ordo)
So, that's the official explanation/history of today's feast day, honoring the Mother-church, in Rome.

"He made a whip out of cords, drove them all out...spilled the coins...and overturned their tables..."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, we were all led to believe that Christ was like us in **all** things... **BUT** sin. Yet, here we have him taking a whip to people, turning over tables, and only God knows what other acts of violence. Now, if you or I did such a thing, not only would it be a sin, BUT...we'd probably be arrested. So,

'How is it that it's not a sin for Christ, BUT...it would be a sin for us?' you ask.

Well, I'm glad you asked that question!

We now enter into the realm of morality: the '**rightness**' or the '**wrongness**' of an act. The morality of an act is determined by, among other things, the *INTENT* involved in an act.

For example, if I burn down a forest to get even with God, it is a sin. However, if I burn down a forest to build a city, it's *NOT* a sin. **Same** act, different *INTENT*... one **is** sinful, the other is **not**.

For example, if I cut off my finger to impress someone, it is a sin, self-mutilation. However, if I cut off my finger to dispense with the gangrene, it is *NOT* a sin, amputation. **Same** act, different *INTENT*, one **is** a sin, one is **not**.

After applying the '**rightness**' or '**wrongness**' of an act, I now move to an, often, confusing area of '**guilt due to anger**.' We often confess, in the Confessional, that we got angry with someone... a spouse, a child, a sibling, another driver.

1st, anger is a 'feeling.' Like sadness, joy, frustration, anxiety... things over which we have little or no control, **anger is a feeling**. In and of itself, it is *NOT* a sin. Now... what we **DO** with that anger *MAY* of *MAY NOT* be sinful. It may even be 'graceful!'

For example, if the kid spills a glass of milk... right into the pork chops or vegetables...every night at 5:06 pm and you scream & yell and 'carry on' for the next 10 mins., there's a sin. It's **not** a sin because you **felt/got** angry. It is a sin because you **acted out** on the angry feeling...**AND** in a way that was unjustifiable. You see, that angry **feeling** was a 'trigger,'... a moment for grace... or a moment sin.

In your frustration/anger, you *COULD* have been calm, have cleaned up the mess with an eye to Christ-crucified, and done so without ranting & raving. It wasn't a grave sin. You didn't throw the kid into the wall.

For example, it's 3 o'clock in the morning. You get out of bed to inspect an odd sound emanating from your child's bedroom. Pushing the door, you discover an intruder reaching into your baby's crib. In your unbounded anger, you charge into the intruder and, without even thinking about it, shove him out the 3-story window, right into the concrete stairwell leading to the basement entrance. You kill that person outright. You experienced great anger and you acted on it and you committed *NO* sin... because your anger, in this case, was justifiable.

My point is that anger is: 1st, a feeling. 2nd, it is a moment of grace **or** sin. And, 3rd, it (act in anger) can be justifiable. We call this 3rd element '**JUST**' or 'justifiable' anger. And this brings me full-circle to today's Gospel and Christ's flare of anger... whipping people/cattle and upturning tables.

He was absolutely outraged, i.e., **VERY** angry that people were turning his father's house into a marketplace and a den of thieves. We believe his anger/outrage was justifiable. Hence, it was *NOT* sinful and the statement holds true, as we were always led to believe: **"Christ was like us in all things...BUT sin!"**

So-o, we now have a very interesting insight to anger & sin.

Is every time we get angry 'Justifiable?' THAT doesn't matter because anger, itself, is not sinful. Remember, anger is a feeling.

*Anger only becomes a sin when we act out on it... AND that 'action' MAY even be justifiable. We know Christ's violent actions in anger were 'Justifiable,' **BUT** ... how do we know if our 'angry-actions' are justifiable?*

Say the husband comes home late with lipstick on his collar, reeking of booze and... you hit him over the head with a frying pan... or, say put a bullet in his head.

How do we know when our actions in anger are justifiable?

In such a quandary, just ask yourself if God would be displeased with your action.

***For example**, the bullet to the head? YOU might think it justifiable...but you know God wouldn't be pleased.*

So, that's the lesson in morality for today: Anger is NOT a sin. It could be a source of grace. It could even be justifiable if it didn't displease God.

*And, finally: **Christ was like us in all things... BUT sin.***

I close with this prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us to control our anger and to seize the moment for grace rather than sin.

And, please, Dear Lord, keep those crazy drivers away from me.

If that's not possible, Lord, give me an abundance of your Divine Patience.

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you... the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.