

## *Reflection for Third Sunday of Lent*

*By Revd Christina Mason*

Our Old Testament reading this morning is from Exodus, Chapter 20, the receipt by Moses of the 10 commandments (the Decalogue). For those of us of a certain age, these I think would be extremely familiar. We used to say these words very regularly as part of the BCP Holy Communion Service. Although I didn't go to a church school, we often used to hear them in our assembly. Many of us will know these words by heart, I am sure.

In some ways, I think it's rather a shame that we no longer have the full reading of the 10 commandments as a regular part of our service. The Lord's Summary of the Law, which has replaced the Decalogue in our modern liturgies, somehow doesn't have the same level of challenge. Look again and reflect on the individual laws, one by one. Each is challenging.

When I was a young person hearing "thou shalt do no murder", I used to ask myself, well what about killing in war? And what about today in America, the continuance of the death penalty? And then there is the commandment about not coveting. Well, we may not be coveting an ass or an ox, but I do think we are encouraged each day of our lives by the media to covet; the advertisers take great delight in telling us about the "must haves". Keeping the Sabbath of course has long gone out of the window, except perhaps in some of our remoter Scottish Islands or in Orthodox Judaism. These commandments bear reading again and considering them thoughtfully.

Our gospel reading also contains a challenge for us. Here Jesus is shown as on fire with rage about the way in which the temple was being used for selling animals and by the money lenders. He found little by way of sacred space. Entering the temple Jesus found that it had forgotten its purpose. "*Stop making my Father's house a market place*", he said. Today, perhaps it is important for us to consider our places of worship, their appearance, and what they contain, and very importantly, what we wish them to convey to those who come into them.

So - two passages with plenty to be reflecting on in the forthcoming week.  
AMEN