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November 21, 2019

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“All the people were hanging on his words” (Luke 19:48).

When Jesus drove the money changers from the temple, he was exposing the nerve of institutional religion, the love of money. He might have been ignored or forgiven for mounting a theological challenge to the legitimacy of temple worship. He could have been arrested for disturbing the peace. But to disrupt the flow of coins into the temple treasury was real heresy.

A scandal at the Vatican bank warrants international media attention. Continued corruption is an embarrassment to Pope Francis. One of his first reforms was to bring in professional auditors to make the bank more transparent. While it is a small operation compared to most corporations or governments, the church's handling of money is a ready target for critics of its spiritual mission and moral authority.

Jesus criticized the temple leadership with the words of the prophets about turning God's house into a marketplace and a brisk business in converting foreign currencies into temple coinage. Everyone was on the take: the high priests, the Herodians and the Romans. The only reason the authorities did not arrest Jesus on the spot was that he was a sensation in Jerusalem at the time of Passover. He was teaching daily in the temple, and crowds hung on his every word. But his fate was already sealed.

As if to emphasize religion's love of money, arranging Jesus' betrayal and arrest in the middle of the night was a transaction involving thirty pieces of silver. The price

on his head was the cost of a slave or enough to buy a small field to bury the poor. Jesus went to the cross with the clothes on his back and a seamless cloak his executioners cast lots on to see who got what.

Jesus' final lesson to his disciples was to depart this world on empty. Give away everything, all your possessions, your talents and especially your love. His own *kenosis* — self-emptying — was like God's outpouring of the divine heart, first in the act of creation, then in redeeming our human failure to care for the world and for one another.

We are little churches, and our lives are acts of worship. The Sanctuary of the Self needs purifying from time to time to make sure it does not become a marketplace for quid pro quo or a showcase for our personal piety. If we keep it simple and spare there will be room in our house for the Holy Spirit, who sends us forth each day with the beatitudes and the corporal works of mercy. This is worship at its finest, a prayer God always hears and answers.

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