

MOTHER CHURCH

JOHN 2:13-22



Today is the feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica which is located in Rome. We might think that St Peter's is the pope's main church in Rome but, in fact, that distinction goes to the Basilica of St John Lateran.

St John Lateran is the pope's main church because it is the cathedral church of the Diocese of Rome, which has the pope as its bishop. It is the seat of papal authority and therefore is, in a sense, the parish church of Catholics throughout the world.

Every year, on 9 November, the anniversary of its dedication is celebrated by Catholics everywhere as a way of expressing the unity of the whole Church with the Bishop of Rome.

It is an opportunity for us to reflect on the universal nature of the Church, and what it means to be a member of it. ■

REFLECT

Today we celebrate the feast of the dedication of a particular church in Rome, but the readings remind us that what is really important is not bricks and mortar but rather our relationship with God and one another.

In the Gospel, Jesus drives out the money changers who had turned the Temple into a marketplace rather than a house of worship. He then refers to his own body as a sanctuary, a theme taken up by St Paul in today's second reading.

The Greek word for Church is *ekkleisia*, which means a community of believers, people who come together in faith. When St Paul tells the people at Corinth that they are God's building, he is speaking of the community that they have become. Each of them has become a new person because God's Spirit lives in and among them. They are the holy temple in whom God resides.

This is an extraordinary statement when you think about it. We are God's building. We are God's temple because God dwells in us.

This knowledge has clear implications for how we see and relate to our physical bodies, and for how we see and relate to each other. I must treat my physical body as a sacred vessel, taking good care of it, respecting and treasuring it. I must treat every person's body in the same way. Imagine how different our world would be if we all tried to do just that. ■

SAY

"Lord, I thank you for the gift of the ecclesial community of which I am part. Help me to do my part to build it up. Amen."

DO

Through baptism you are a member of the Church. Think about what it means for you to be a member of the Church.

LEARN

The Emperor Constantine built the Lateran Basilica in the fourth century on land that had belonged to the Laterani family (hence the name 'Lateran'). It has had a rather unfortunate history. The original building, dedicated to the Saviour, was sacked by barbarian invaders and restored in the fifth century, ruined by an earthquake in the eighth century and rebuilt in the ninth, twice burnt down in the fourteenth century and then restored. It was the residence of the popes until 1308. Pope Innocent X commissioned the present structure in 1646.

'Basilica' is the word given to an early form of building used for Christian worship. It was modelled on the Roman Basilica – a building used as a law court and a commercial exchange. At first the name was used of churches which resembled the Roman building, but now the title of 'basilica' is given by the pope to certain privileged churches both in Rome and throughout the world.

The dedication of churches can be traced back to the Jewish practice of dedicating the Temple in Jerusalem to God. Once the Temple had been dedicated, there was a feast each year to celebrate the anniversary of the dedication. This feast was celebrated not only in Jerusalem but in every synagogue as well. Similarly, every Western Catholic church observes the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome.

PRAY

Pray for our Holy Father. Ask the Lord's blessing on his ministry of leadership and service as Bishop of Rome, and our bishop, too.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*I saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.*

Or

*Behold God's dwelling with the human race.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people,
and God himself with them will be their God.*

COLLECT

O God, who from living and chosen stones
prepare an eternal dwelling for your majesty,
increase in your Church the spirit of grace you have bestowed,
so that by new growth your faithful people
may build up the heavenly Jerusalem.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Or

O God, who were pleased to call your Church the Bride,
grant that the people that serves your name
may revere you, love you and follow you,
and may be led by you
to attain your promises in heaven.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel.

In those days: The angel brought me back to the door of the Temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the Temple towards the east (for the Temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the Temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me round on the outside to the outer gate that faces towards the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. And he said to me, 'This water flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 46(45):2-3. 5-6. 8-9. R. 5

*R: The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place, the abode of the Most High.*

1. God is for us a refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in time of distress:
so we shall not fear though the earth should rock,
though the mountains quake to the heart of the sea. **R.**
2. The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place, the abode of the Most High.
God is in her midst, she cannot be shaken;
God will help her at the dawning of the day. **R.**

3. The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come and behold the works of the LORD,
the awesome deeds he has done on the earth. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.
Brothers and sisters: You are God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL 2 Chronicles 7:16

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

I have chosen and consecrated this house, says the LORD,
that my name may be there for ever.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 2:13-22

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the Temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, the offering made here
and grant that by it those who seek your favour
may receive in this place
the power of the Sacraments
and the answer to their prayers.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Be built up like living stones,
into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who chose to foreshadow for us
the heavenly Jerusalem
through the sign of your Church on earth,
grant, we pray,
that, by our partaking of this Sacrament,
we may be made the temple of your grace
and may enter the dwelling place of your glory.
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*