

NOVEMBER 9, 2021
Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
John 2: 13-22

“BE INSTRUMENTS OF UNITY AND PEACE.”

Our gospel is one of the rarest expression of emotion of Jesus. He was angry to those people who made the temple a house of trade and commerce, and a place of occasions of sins by disrespecting the temple. This temple is the dwelling place of God and where people meet Him in worship and prayer. “Jesus referred to the temple as his Father's house which was being made into a "house of trade" (John 2:16) or "den of robbers" (Mark 11:17). That is why he used physical force to expel the money-changers. The prophecy of Malachi foretold the coming of the Lord unexpectedly to his Temple to ‘purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord’ (Malachi 3:1-4). Jesus' disciples recalled the prophetic words from Psalm 69: ‘Zeal for your house will consume me (Psalm 69:9). This was understood as a prophecy describing the Messiah. Here the disciples saw more clearly Jesus as the Messiah who burned with zeal for the house of God.”¹

What is the importance of this symbolic gesture of Jesus about the place of worship and our own body as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Jesus is reminding us to take care first of our body because we are God's temple, the Holy Spirit dwells on us, make clean of it by avoiding anything that can destroy the dwelling place of God, keep our bodies pure and our souls holy. Likewise, we need to respect the place of worship, the Church, the building because it is here that we meet our Lord in worship, sacrifice and prayer. This is a house of God. When we fulfill our Sunday obligation, this must not be out of fear or committing mortal sin and eternal punishment but out of love, respect for God. The gospel also reminds us that our parish Church is a place where all of us come together as a community of believers, offer our lives, petitions and needs to God. This is our parish

¹ www.dailyscripture.net

Church wherein we gain strength and blessings through the sacraments. We need to maintain this place as a holy place where people offered their time, talents and treasures, and offering ourselves in various ministries to continue the mission Christ entrusted to us.

Today, we also celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. Why this is so important? This basilica is the *cathedra*, the seat of the Bishop of Rome who happened to be the Pope. The Lateran Basilica was dedicated on the 9th of November 324 AD by Pope St. Sylvester. “On the façade of the basilica there is an inscription in Latin which reads, ‘the mother and mistress of all churches of Rome and the world.’ The first church building on this site was built in the 4th century when the Emperor Constantine gave land he had received from the wealthy Lateran family. The present Lateran basilica was erected in 1646. It ranks first among the four major basilicas in Rome (with St Peter’s, St Mary Major’s and St Paul’s Outside the Walls) as the Ecumenical Mother Church. On top of its facade are 15 large statues representing Christ, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and 12 Doctors of the Church. Underneath its high altar are the remains of a small wooden table on which tradition claims St. Peter celebrated the Eucharist.”²

My brothers and sisters, as we celebrate today this feast day, the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, the Pope’s cathedral, we are expressing, as the whole Church, unity with Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome, a unity of all churches with Rome. So, let us ask in this Eucharist that we may be instruments of unity and peace among our brothers and sisters and be the living house of God filled with the presence of Jesus Christ our Lord.

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie