

2014

- Now today we celebrate the feast of the dedication of the basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.
- Just like our own cathedral in Santa Fe is the central church of our archdiocese—St. John Lateran is the cathedral of Rome—the pope’s Church in his role as Bishop of Rome.
- And St. John Lateran is the oldest church in Rome...one of the most beautiful churches in the world.
- And so it is considered the “mother” of all Catholic Churches, and, thus, of course, of all Christianity...because all Christianity has come forth from our Catholic Church.
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- But why a day which celebrates the dedication of a church?
- Because in the devotion of today, we recognize the unity of the Church worldwide, and with it the authority of the Pope as having the same role as Peter had in the early church—the leader of Christ’s disciples—and the unity of not only Catholics around the world, but all Christians as well.
- This unifying authority is not meant to be limiting for us, but rather a freedom...knowing that, if we are obedient to the Church, we can rest assured of being in the right...for we remember what Jesus told Peter, and by extension the office to the Pope: *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and what you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and what you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.”*
- In other words, what the pope and the bishops in union with him decree, is what goes...and is the measure by which God will judge us. Not that they can go off on some tangent; they are not masters of the Gospel, but its servants.
- Pray always for the pope and the bishops, whoever they may be...for they have a responsibility and burden above all others...responsible for not only their own souls, or even of all Catholics...but literally for every soul upon the earth...for whatever they teach, or fail to teach.

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- Now the feast of the dedication of a church is also a time to reflect upon the holiness of any Catholic church...remembering what that church building symbolizes.
- Jesus knew that the Temple in Jerusalem, as grand as it was, was not going to endure. He told His disciples as they were admiring the Temple: *"You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down."* (Mat 24:2 RSV)...and less than forty years after Jesus' death and resurrection, His prophecy came to pass, and the temple was completely destroyed by the Roman armies.
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- Yet Jesus was, and IS, the defender and essence of mankind's true relationship with God...a relationship that original sin had shattered.
- That early covenant was centered on the Temple of Jerusalem... and the worship that took place there fostered the rebuilding of that relationship. It was the place where man and God came together.
- But the Old Covenant was only the preliminary step in God's plan of salvation.
- It prepared the way for the new and everlasting Covenant in Christ...a covenant offered not just to one nation, but to all peoples, through the Holy Catholic Church.
- And so, the Temple, by symbolizing God's plan of salvation for mankind, was in fact a symbol of Christ himself.
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- But unlike the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, is indestructible.
- This is the difference between the Old and New Covenants: the New Covenant in which we now live lasts for all time.
- This is also the reason why the Catholic Church, in spite of the never-ending attempts to destroy it throughout history, remains not only undestroyed, but grows ever stronger.

- The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ; and since Christ is indestructible, so is His Church...and as He assures us, “*the gates of hell will not prevail against it*” (Matthew 16:18).
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- Today's feast symbolizes this.
- Dedicated in 324 AD, the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome was the first permanent public place of worship for Christians in the world.
- Until that time the power and might of the Roman Empire was determined to utterly destroy the Christian religion.
- Christians refused to worship the Roman pagan gods, and so were considered enemies of the state...arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and cruelly executed for their faith.
- As we celebrate Veterans’ Day this week, we are not only thankful to our nation’s veterans, but even more so to the long-deceased veterans of our faith—who stood in that lonely breach of early martyrdom.
- Only when the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in 312 was the Church free to breathe, and Christians, backed by Constantine, built the Lateran Basilica.
- And ever since, she has been a symbol of that first great victory of the Church...showing the whole world that this new Temple, the Mystical Body of Christ, is indestructible.
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- The Temple of Jerusalem was deeply revered, and yet it was simply a symbol of Christ.
- As we celebrate the dedication of St. John Lateran Basilica today, should we not revere and rejoice even more greatly in this building in which Jesus (God) is truly housed in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist...in His physical reality...and whom we receive in the Mass...having the truly incredible privilege of sharing in the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross for our salvation.
- That is what the Mass IS.

- This—and every other Catholic Church in the world—is where Jesus comes to us in that unprecedented humility of allowing us to consume Him under the appearance of mere bread and wine...that we might be enfolded in Him, and live with God forever.
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- And so, remembering all of this, we join the longing heard in the psalms:
  - *I rejoiced when I heard them say: “Let us go to the house of the Lord”, and now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem...” (Psalm 122:1-2)*
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  - *O LORD, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy glory abides. (Psa 26:8)*
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  - *One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:  
To dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
That I may gaze upon the loveliness of the LORD  
and contemplate his temple. (Psalm 27:4)*

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome

Lectionary: 671

[Reading 1](#)

[Responsorial Psalm](#)

[Reading 2](#)

[Gospel](#)

Reading 1

[Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12](#)

The angel brought me  
back to the entrance of the temple,  
and I saw water flowing out  
from beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east,  
for the façade of the temple was toward the east;  
the water flowed down from the southern side of the temple,  
south of the altar.  
He led me outside by the north gate,  
and around to the outer gate facing the east,  
where I saw water trickling from the southern side.  
He said to me,  
“This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Arabah,  
and empties into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh.  
Wherever the river flows,  
every sort of living creature that can multiply shall live,  
and there shall be abundant fish,  
for wherever this water comes the sea shall be made fresh.  
Along both banks of the river, fruit trees of every kind shall grow;  
their leaves shall not fade, nor their fruit fail.  
Every month they shall bear fresh fruit,  
for they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary.  
Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9](#)

**R. (5) The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!**

God is our refuge and our strength,  
an ever-present help in distress.

Therefore, we fear not, though the earth be shaken  
and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

**R. The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!**

There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,  
the holy dwelling of the Most High.

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God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;  
God will help it at the break of dawn.

R. **The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!**

The LORD of hosts is with us;

our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Come! behold the deeds of the LORD,  
the astounding things he has wrought on earth.

R. **The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!**

Reading II

[1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17](#)

Brothers and sisters:

You are God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me,  
like a wise master builder I laid a foundation,  
and another is building upon it.

But each one must be careful how he builds upon it,  
for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there,  
namely, Jesus Christ.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God,  
and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

If anyone destroys God's temple,

God will destroy that person;  
for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.

Gospel

[Jn 2:13-22](#)

Since the Passover of the Jews was near,  
Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves,  
as well as the money-changers seated there.

He made a whip out of cords

and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen,

and spilled the coins of the money-changers

and overturned their tables,

and to those who sold doves he said,

“Take these out of here,

and stop making my Father's house a marketplace.”

His disciples recalled the words of Scripture,

*Zeal for your house will consume me.*

At this the Jews answered and said to him,

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“What sign can you show us for doing this?”

Jesus answered and said to them,

“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Jews said,

“This temple has been under construction for forty-six years,  
and you will raise it up in three days?”

But he was speaking about the temple of his Body.

Therefore, when he was raised from the dead,  
his disciples remembered that he had said this,

and they came to believe the Scripture

and the word Jesus had spoken.