

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

For two consecutive Sundays, the rhythm of Ordinary Time has been gracefully interrupted by profound liturgical feasts. Last week, All Souls' Day replaced the 31st Sunday, drawing our hearts into prayerful remembrance of the faithful departed. This Sunday, the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica-the Pope's cathedral and the mother church of all churches-takes precedence over the 32nd Sunday, inviting us to contemplate the church as the dwelling place of God among His people.

Though often overshadowed by the splendor of St. Peter's, Saint John Lateran holds primacy as the Pope's official seat. Built during the reign of Emperor Constantine on land donated by the Lateran family, it was consecrated by Pope Sylvester I in the 4th century. Today, it stands as a testament to enduring faith, renewal, and mission.

The readings for this feast reveal a profound truth: God desires not only consecrated buildings, but living temples, hearts open to grace and attuned to His presence.

In the first reading, the prophet Ezekiel shares a vision of a new temple from which a life-giving river flows. Wherever the water touches, life springs forth. This powerful image reveals the transformative grace of God, bringing healing, nourishment, and renewal to the most barren spaces. For the exiled, and for us today, it is a vision of new life and hope.

In the second reading, Saint Paul reminds us that we are temples of the Holy Spirit-living stones consecrated for holiness, reverence, and mission. As bearers of divine grace, we are entrusted with the sacred task of building God's kingdom through lives rooted in worship, shaped by integrity, and pour out in selfless service.

In the Gospel, Jesus cleanses the temple, revealing His zeal for true worship and reverence. His actions challenge us to examine our hearts: Do we welcome God's presence? Do our lives reflect the holiness and mission of the church?

As we celebrate this sacred feast, let us rekindle our reverence for sacred spaces-not only the churches we enter, but the sanctuary of our lives. May God's grace flow through us like the river in Ezekiel's vision, bringing healing to the wounded, hope to the weary, and renewal to every soul we encounter.

Rooted in Christ, may we become living temples, radiant with worship, unwavering in truth, and overflowing with grace.

God bless you all.

Fr. Dr. Ben

Thank You from the Bottom of My Heart

I am deeply touched by the thoughtful birthday cards and generous gifts you sent my way. Your kindness, love, and beautiful gestures mean more to me than words can express. May God bless each of you abundantly for the joy and warmth you bring into my life. I am truly grateful- thank you again! **Fr. Dr. Ben**