

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome (Memorial Mass)
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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.
There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,
the holy dwelling of the Most High.
God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;
God will help it at the break of dawn.
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.

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,
“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.

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Today we celebrate and remember.

In the Church calendar, we celebrate the feast of the dedication of The Lateran Basilica.

It may seem unusual to celebrate a building far away.

But this building, which was a palace of the first Christian Roman emperor Constantine and which he gave to the pope in about 311, this building, which still stands, is the first of the Churches of Rome. It is therefore our mother church. It was the residence of the popes until 1308 and the cathedral of Rome.

It was first dedicated to the Saviour, "Basilica Salvatoris", and then later dedicated to St. John. A Benedictine monastery of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist adjoined the basilica, and its monks were once in charge of maintaining services in the church.

Like the church, like us, this building has had its ups & downs; it has experienced fires, wars, earthquakes and bad popes. It has had to be renovated and restored. But it still stands, the mother church of the Roman Catholic Church, and its dedication marked a sea change in the history of the world. It is the first genuine stone of the building which Saint Paul speaks of in his letter this morning, the first stone of the Church to which we belong, which in the image of the first reading today, makes the world new and gives life.

Today we celebrate and remember. That is an interesting word...re-member; to rejoin, to bring to mind, to actively think of.

During the month of November, always the last month of the church year, the Church reminds us about our own end, and in fact where the whole cosmos will end up. During this month the Church especially remembers and prays for all those who have died. We began with All Saints Day, remembering those who have achieved the eternal destiny for which God created them.

The following day, there was All Souls Day, when we remembered and prayed for those who have died and are assured the eternal destiny for which God created them, but who are now in the final stage of preparation for that happiness.

And on November 6, we in the monastery remembered all the benefactors and friends of the monastic community who have died, and also our own relatives.

On November 13, we will remember all the members of our monastic community who have died.

Today we remember and pray for all the members of the Priory family, your and our family, who have died in the last year. We of course mourn all of those who have left us behind, but most especially those whose passing has been most recent and therefore whose loss many of us feel most.

Those of us who have lost parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and brothers and friends, we know that they lived and sacrificed for us. We know that there is an empty space in our lives which these most dear family members once filled. And so we pray for them and offer this mass for them, so that we may show them our love and do something important & beneficial for them.

We do not know exactly, but knowing ourselves and our own imperfections as we do, we suppose that few humans immediately upon death attain that union with God we call heaven. That would mean most persons spend a time in that condition we call Purgatory in which they are prepared to look upon the face of God and live forever.

Our faith teaches us that when they are in that condition, we can help them by our prayers. We can help them be ready sooner than they would otherwise.

We know that at the end of our lives: "each of us shall give an account of himself to God." In our accounting to God of ourselves, it would be counted against us if we were ungrateful to our deceased family members and neglected to freely help when we could.

Moreover our faith teaches us that in their condition in purgatory, they can help us too with their prayers. And because they now know so much more about what we really need to complete our lives successfully, we can only imagine how powerful and directed those prayers could be. I know that my parents and grandparents are helping me now, better than ever they could when they left me.

Jesus tells us that if a grain of wheat dies, it produces much fruit. His death produced a harvest of salvation for humanity. The death of each of our loved ones set a seal on the meaning of their lives, which meaning in different ways included us, our generation, our support or our growth. We are the fruit of all of those who have gone on before us. We carry in us their faith, their genes, their values, their ideas & hopes, and above all their love.

By their lives and in their deaths, our loved ones have shown us what is important. This is hard for us... Death is hard for us to accept, hard for us to understand. One can spend a life running from death, which can not ever be avoided; or one can invest a life preparing for death, which can be peacefully accepted or even welcomed. Death is a horizon beyond which we cannot see; it is a horizon which when we see someone pass over it, we do not see them again in this life; they do not reappear from the other direction coming back to us. Only one has come back to us from going over that horizon - Jesus Christ - who suffered and died for us, was buried, but who rose again on the third day, just as he told his listeners he would in the gospel this morning. This is the most significant doctrine of our faith, which gives us hope in the ultimate triumph of God's love in our own selves, which are destined to rise again also after each of us passes over that horizon. We are destined to rise with Him and with our loved ones, who too will rise. Jesus tells us in another place in the gospels, The Lord, the God of Abraham is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive.

At his last supper Jesus said: It was for this purpose that I came to this hour (meaning the hour of his death). Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying "I have glorified it and will glorify it again."

God is glorified in the perfect and selfless love of his Son. God is glorified in the worship, love and faithfulness of His church, despite all it's mistakes and failures.

God is glorified in our own lives in as much as we are His image & in so far as we resemble his Son and in so far as we try to do his will, that unique purpose he has willed for each us. In this way God is glorified in us despite all our mistakes and failures. And God is glorified in the lives of our loved ones who have gone to him before us. God is glorified in this Mass, which is our re-enactment, and our participation in the life-giving death defeating sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In this mass the Church past, present and future is one, together in the sight of God, the church past present & future symbolized by the 2000 year old Lateran Basilica that will endure long into the future.

We are here together with all our loved ones who have died; we are with them the stones which make up the church, the communion of saints. And that includes in some way all people who seek God with a sincere heart

Our prayers for them today and everyday in a very real way keep alive although in a new way the relationship they had with us in this world and keeps them alive in us. I know that my parents are here praying for me even as I pray for them.

In this let us be joyful and thankful as we pray: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let the perpetual light of your presence shine upon them and give them peace."