

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community+ Spirit of Christ Mission
The Feast of the Dedication of Saint John Lateran Cathedral
Sunday November 9, 2025

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Psalm 46:3, 4-5, 8,11; 1 Corinthians 9:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22

Homily ~ Fr. Ed Hislop



Saint John Lateran Cathedral, Rome

At first glance, today's feast of the Dedication of Saint John Lateran Cathedral in Rome, seems unusual or at least of little importance to us. But as one of the earliest major cathedral churches to be constructed in the world, in the 4th century, it reveals both the significance and necessity of the house" for the church. For us it is also important as we continue to do the work necessary in "our house for the church" in this place.

The basilica of Saint John Lateran is the Cathedral Church of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, making it a spiritual home for Catholics everywhere—a place, a house, where the mystery of God is entered, the stories of God, Christ and believers are told, believed and lived, where the life giving waters of baptism bring new and unending life, and a home for the Lord's Table around which the world is called to gather. The altar at the Lateran is believed to be built over a wooden table on which Peter

himself is said to have celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Christian community of Rome.

Companion to the Calendar, LTP, page 166

It is a "house" built to both honor and feel the wondrous mystery of the Trinity, a place where ordinary people could encounter the wonder of God's love and presence, and to both touch and be touched by God's beauty revealed in the work of human hands and hearts. It is a place, a space reflecting the vision of Ezekiel we heard a moment ago: *"The angel brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water flowing out from beneath the threshold of the temple... wherever the water flows, every sort of creature shall... live."*

At the threshold of the Cathedral, in a separate building is the Font of Baptism. A large eight-sided pool, designed to accommodate the immersion of several persons chosen by the Church for baptism. The space is large, reflecting the wonder, significance and centrality of Baptism, where death is entered and eternal life begins. Washed clean the church is born again and again, so that, in the words of Ezekiel, it *"shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary."* Such was the vision when this great house for the Church was built...

Built to house the altar, the Table of the Lord, which was understood to be Christ himself, who gathers again and again, century after century, people of every sort and kind, to pass through the waters of life, the flowing river of eternity, to find their way to the Table, the holy meal offered again and again by Christ himself, and

to “Do this in his memory”, becoming one with the very One remembered. The place, the space, its beauty and wonder, and the care offered for it, is a gateway into the mystery of eternity.

To celebrate this Ancient Cathedral Church in Rome, connects us, with generation after generation, who have been touched, transformed and inspired by the wonder and beauty of creation and the graceful, artful work of human hands, reflecting the handiwork and beauty of God’s creation.

It also reminds us that we, we, are in truth, as Paul reminds us, “God’s building.” We must be careful how we build upon it. “We are the temple of God,” and the place we gather must honor that vision and reveal the wonder of that truth. The temple is Christ’s Body, which we become at this holy table, which is built on the Table of the last supper and the ancient wooden table of Peter upon which the altar is built at the Lateran.

Like those disciples in the Gospel, and like those who first envisioned Saint John Lateran, “Zeal for God’s house will consume” us, lest we make the temple a mere “marketplace” of convenience, that does not fill us with God’s

wonder, Christ’s mission, and the Spirit’s empowerment.

When we gather as the Christian community, in this house for the church, we celebrate our faith and vision. We gather to celebrate what is most nobly human and truly Church. Our actions witness the great deeds God has done. We confirm an age-old covenant. With that vision and depth can the environment in which we worship be anything less than a vehicle to meet the Lord and to encounter one another? The challenge of our environment, the place in which we gather, like the vision and work of those who first constructed the Cathedral of Saint John Lateran, is the final challenge of Christ: *“We must make ready until he returns in glory.”* *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship #107*

So, stirred up by the Lord, we have set about to work on his house in this place. We have begun!

So we sing with an open heart and a spirit of wonder: *“Bless these walls, bless this space; find in us a holy place. Make us new, one in you, gathered here to grow in faith.”*

Hymn at presentation of the gifts, Bless These Walls, GIA publications.

