

## **Dedication of Lateran Basilica**

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. There are 4 major basilicas in Rome: St. Peter's at the Vatican, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, St. Mary Major, and the Lateran Basilica. The Lateran Basilica is the Cathedral-Church of the Bishop of Rome, who is the pope. Every bishop has a cathedral. The Lateran Basilica is the pope's cathedral. This is why its important for Christians throughout the world, and why we're celebrating it today instead of the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In remembering this specific church building we turn our hearts and minds to contemplate the deeper reality of the Church. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ. Physical church buildings, such as ours, help us to visualize this spiritual reality of the Church. As the bricks of this building form the solid edifice of this church, so we are joined to each other and connected to Jesus Christ, head and founder of the Church.

The Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus Christ. Her teaching, beliefs, and practices are from Jesus Christ Himself. The Church has developed her understanding over time, but it can't evolve or change. Revelation of Jesus ended when He ascended into Heaven. We've just been trying to deepen our understanding ever since.

What ensures us that we are connected to the faith of Jesus are the four marks of the Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. There are part of the

Creed that we profess every Sunday. All four of these are present in the true Church that Jesus Christ founded. Only the churches that are in communion with the Pope, the Bishop of Rome and Successor of Peter, are part of this Church of Jesus Christ. The Church helps to protect the teaching of Jesus, and to guide us all to Him and to Heaven. The truth of Jesus Christ sets us free. His teaching is what is truly compassionate and loving.

In our Gospel we see the Cleansing of the Temple as its referred to. The priests and leaders and the people were allowing commerce within the Temple area, which is a place of prayer and communion with God. The culture and society of the day was allowing this inside, saying it was ok. Practices and beliefs seeped into the faith of the Israelites from the outside. These things weren't part of the faith. Weren't part of their teaching. But was allowed to happen. Became popular. The Israelites were blending in with their surrounding culture and society. And so Jesus called them out. He even flipped tables and whipped them.

Thankfully this doesn't happen today. We don't allow foreign beliefs and practices into our hearts that water down the faith causing lukewarmness among disciples today. Of course not! We're no better than them. We all have to constantly be on our guard. Jesus did what He did in the Gospel because He wants his disciples to be all in, to be on fire with love of Him, to do the Catholic thing.

We might not have money changers in Catholic Churches, but how many people say they're Catholic but don't come to Mass on Sundays? They only come

when they have time. We might not be selling items in Catholic Churches, but how many Catholics hold to beliefs not held by the Catholic Church? Why say you're Catholic but not do and say the things of the Catholic Church?

If we join a club then we do the things the club holds to right? For example, why would a Saints fan root for the Falcons? In today's world we need more and more Catholics, especially laity, who faithfully live it out, and who faithfully proclaim the teaching of Jesus. We don't need lukewarm practice. Jesus says He will vomit the lukewarm out of His mouth. Nor do we need watered down teaching because our culture says something differently. Its not compassionate nor is it loving if lead another away from the teaching of Jesus Christ, which is the same as the Catholic faith. We need faithful witnesses seen in the world. [where are the faithful Catholics in the world?]

Jesus did what He did because His heart burns for us all. He wants us to get to Heaven, and so He will turn some tables over to wake us up. Our hearts should also burn for Him too. If we say we're Christian, if say we're Catholic, then let's do it regardless of where it leads us or whom we might offend. To live out the truth, to proclaim the truth, we have to risk being offensive. Jesus was so offensive He whipped people, turned over tables, and was eventually nailed to a tree. He did it out of love for us. His heart burns for love of us still.

Let's be bold for Jesus. Let's surrender to Him. What did Yoda tell Luke Skywalker?... "Do or do not. There is no try."