

November 9, 2025

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome

John 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.

### **Background:**

It is the Basilica of St. Peter, built over the tomb of St. Peter, that most Catholics recognize and see as the sign of the church's presence in the world. But it is St. John Lateran which is the cathedral church of Rome. Here is the location the Chair of Peter upon which the pope sits when issuing a teaching that is to be considered infallible and binding upon all the faithful. The celebration of the dedication of the St. John Lateran Cathedral is an important occasion for the life of the Church. Therefore, when the feast falls on a Sunday, the church reflects on readings that are especially chosen for the feast: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Psalm 46: 2, 3, 5-6, 8, 9; 1 Corinthians 3: 9c-11, 16-17 and John 2:13-22.

All four Gospels record Jesus going into the Temple and overturning the tables (Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-18, and Luke 19:45-46). Matthew, Mark and Luke all place the event at the end of Jesus' ministry, before his arrest, trial and crucifixion. Placed here it seems to explain why the religious authorities of day finally put into motion their plan to have Jesus arrested and crucified. In John's Gospel, it is the raising of Lazarus that leads to the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.

Scripture scholars believe John has placed this event at the beginning of his Gospel as a proclamation of who Jesus is. The inner sanctuary of the Temple was the Holy of Holies. It is here that the ark of the covenant was kept. The covenant was what defined the relationship between God and the Jewish people. God was to be their God, and they were to be God's chosen people. It was from this covenant that their relationship with God flowed. The temple itself became the locus from which that relationship flowed out to all the people and through them to creation. It was as if God's finger touched earth at this spot and from this spot all the blessings of God flowed. In John's Gospel Jesus acts with a passion not found in the other texts. "Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, 'It is written: 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of thieves.'" (Matthew 21:12-13) John includes that Jesus made a whip and the scene recalls a quote from Psalm 69:10 "Because zeal for your house consumes me, I am scorned by those who scorn you." This psalm was associated with the passion by the early Christians. John also includes here Jesus' statement to the Jews that if they tear down the temple he will rebuild it in three days. Although they thought he was talking of the physical temple when he spoke these words, we know that he was speaking symbolically of his own body. By relaying this incident from the life of Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel, John is implying at the very beginning that Jesus is the new temple. While the temple played a central role for the Jewish people in their relationship with God, for the Christians, that central role was to be based in the person of Jesus and his cross and resurrection.

## Reflection Questions:

1. Are there churches or places that have special significance for you in your relationship to God?
2. What significance does the building of the church have for the people who build them (the designers, the laborers, those who made sacrifices to contribute to its building)?
3. How would your faith community be different without a place to gather, pray, meet, teach and organize?
4. What happens to you when you become angry? How do you feel about becoming angry? Has anger ever been an energy that you have used to do something that needed to be done?
5. In the Gospels, does Jesus become angry often? Can you think of other times Jesus became angry? Can you think of other times he used physical force? How do you feel the physical expression of Jesus in the Gospels?
6. As you listen to this reading, what stands out to you? What do you think God is saying to you in that? How would you like to respond?
7. How does this Gospel shed light on the celebration of this feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to [annemarie.lom@gmail.com](mailto:annemarie.lom@gmail.com)

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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## **Excerpts from the readings for November 9, 2025, Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**

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."

*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.*

*The waters of the river 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.*

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.

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.

### **Excerpts from Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Psalm 46:2-9; 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17; and John 2:13-22**

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for November 9th, the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. In the Gospel from John, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Passover, and in the temple, he finds the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers. He makes a whip of cords and drives all these out of the temple area, while telling them, "Stop making my Father's house a marketplace."

The other readings also have references to various forms of temples, and associated streams, and due respect for temples. In the first reading, Ezekiel describes a stream by a temple he was shown in a vision. "I saw water flowing out from beneath the threshold of the temple. Wherever the river flows,

every sort of living creature shall live, and along both banks, fruit trees of every kind shall grow. Psalm 46 proclaims, "The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High. Behold the deeds of the Lord, the astounding things he has wrought on earth!" In the second reading, Paul writes to the Corinthians, "You are God's building. You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you. The temple of God, which you are, is holy."

The five verses about the stream by a temple in the first reading come from near the end of a long description of a vision of a temple that was shown to Ezekiel. This comes near the end of the book of Ezekiel, which itself encompasses 48 chapters. The 12-verse description of the stream concludes the 7-chapter description of the temple. Ezekiel describes a vision of a temple, and he and the Psalm both describe waters at the dwelling of the Most High. Paul explains that we believers are ourselves the temple of God, with the Spirit dwelling within us, and that Jesus Christ himself is the foundation. Jesus, while physically clearing the Jerusalem temple of merchants, also refers to another temple. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," he says, to those who question him. They scoff, thinking he is referring to the one that has been under construction for 46 years. "But he was speaking about the temple of his Body," as his disciples remembered when he was raised from the dead.

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!