**DEDICATION OF ST. JOHN LATERAN BASILICA [9thNovember, 2014]**

READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12 / 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17 / John 2:13-22

THEME: WE ARE GOD’S TEMPLE

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Today is the feast of the dedication of St. John Lateran Basilica (Rome), the mother of all the churches in the city of Rome and in the world. This first Christian church building was a part of a palace of the Lateran family. It was donated to Christians for public worship a few years after the Emperor Constantine had granted them the freedom of worship; and it was dedicated on 9th November, 324AD.

While we celebrate the dedication of a physical church building or temple, the readings remind us that we are the special temple or building of God that He delights in. After all, God sent His Son to save not physical buildings but human beings.

Jesus Christ refers to His body as the temple (*cf*. gospel reading); and by implication we are also God’s temple. This is made more explicit by St. Paul: “you are God’s building.… Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?... God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (second reading).

Beloved, if we are God’s temple, then certain things should not be part of us, just as Jesus declared that the physical temple in Jerusalem was not meant to be a market place. Some of the activities that Jesus found contrary to the decorum of the temple were the trading in animals meant for sacrifices and the exchange of “foreign” currencies for the shekel (meant for paying the temple tax). Besides the fact that it was wrong to sell and buy in the temple, the traders found ways of cheating buyers. If then we are God’s spiritual temple we should desist from cheating, from other forms of corruption and from spiritual impurity in general.

On the other hand, as God’s temple, we are expected to live according to the following positive points (among others); (a) our lives should be built on Christ as our foundation, for St. Paul says: “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (second reading).

(b) As a temple is a house of prayer (*cf*. gospel reading), so we who are God’s spiritual temple should be prayerful. (c) As a temple is a place of sacrifice, and Jesus demonstrated this by sacrificing His very life, so we as God’s temple should practice the act of sacrificing our lives to God. (d) God is all-holy and so what is offered to Him in sacrifice must be pure. Therefore, in contrast to the corruption and acts of impurity in the Jerusalem temple, we should lead upright and pure lives so that our sacrifices would be pleasing to God. (e) As the water flowing from the temple in Ezekiel’s vision brought healing (*cf*. first reading), so whatever emanates from us (be it our words, actions, friendship, influence, etc.) should bring emotional or spiritual healing or hope to others. (f) Finally, as the water flowing from the temple in Ezekiel’s vision brought along food (*cf*. first reading), so as God’s temple we should be the source of spiritual and physical nourishment for many others. Amen!