

The Basilica of St. John Lateran is the Cathedral of Rome, named 'the mother of all churches' in the year 320. Pope Leo lives at the Vatican, but St. John Lateran is his Apostolic See. Today the Catholic Church commemorates what this Basilica means to the entire people of God. It is a symbol of the New Temple, a symbol of the Catholic Church with Christ as its head, and we as living stones of this spiritual building. According to Ezequiel, the Temple is God's house, and the wells in it give new life to God's pilgrim people as they journey through the desert. In our spiritual Temple, Jesus is the Living Water, given by the Spirit in the Sacraments, to vivify and purify us. St. Paul reminds us that we are the new temple: our bodies are vehicles created by God to carry his Saving Presence in this world.

In Jesus' times, the official religion had become an empty institution, a social structure with rituals, prescriptions, bloody sacrifices, and a huge business around the Temple. Jesus comes to implement a religion that is humane, merciful, and followed by people who want to be righteous and loving. He comes and confronts the empty religion established around the Temple of Jerusalem: The great celebrations that take place in the temple, especially during the Passover with so many pilgrims, had led many believers to lose the true meaning of their spirituality. In this context, Jesus proclaims that it is urgent to establish a new spirituality, not centered around the temple or animal sacrifices, but about the kind of people that God created us to be.

According to Jesus, a true spirituality doesn't require meaningless rituals or the sacrifice of animals anymore. The sacrifice of animals is offered in the Temple to please a God who is unmerciful and far away from his people. And this God can be manipulated for those who make promises and perform rituals that are pleasing to Him. Unfortunately, this is the spirituality of many Christians in today's world. They want to please a god who requires bloody sacrifices, and they believe that they can buy their salvation with promises, devotions, and empty rituals. Those who follow this religion use God's name to justify expressions of racism, hatred, exclusion, violence, immorality and injustice. So, Jesus in the Temple teaches us that our spirituality cannot be disconnected from the challenge to change the world and change that has to be done according to God's will.

In the New Temple, God is praised by those who pay attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable, for those who seek integrity and mercy in all their relationships, and for those who get involved in the implementation of justice, peace, and love in the world.

Dear brothers and sisters: The true Temple of God is now the Human Family. Each person in this world is a living stone, created and loved by the Father, anointed and redeemed by the blood of Christ and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Today, we affirm the sacredness of the human body, the sacredness of all forms of life, and the commitment to build up spiritual temples in our families, in our local communities, and in the universal Church. In this Year of Hope, we are to restore our spirituality, following the example of Christ. We are to be people of tender love, generous charity, and true disciples, always seeking integrity in all our relationships. Jesus Christ is the living water, given to us in the sacraments to purify, renew, refresh, and strengthen us. The message is clear: Our spirituality is a call to transform the world and make real God's plan in it. That is true faith, true Christian spirituality, true piety, and it expresses authentically our love of God. Our liturgies, devotions, and individual sacrifices will only make sense if they lead us to see each other as God's beloved children and act with love, respect, and compassion towards each other.

True authentic Christian faith will always lead us to be better people, day by day, to be more committed with deeds of justice and mercy, to become instruments of reconciliation and truth, and to respect all forms of life on our planet. May our faith never be empty, but always be a source of grace and love for ourselves and for others. May the Catholic Church shine in the midst of the darkness of the world, with our righteousness and love.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 9th November 2025
Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, as we celebrate the anniversary of the dedication of Pope Leo's Cathedral as Bishop of Rome today, we pray particularly for him and the whole Church.

1. For Pope Leo, successor of Peter, bishop of Rome and Pastor of the Universal Church, that he may draw us all into the unity of Jesus Christ.
We pray to the Lord.
2. For every community of Christians, that they may recognize that they are God's building, God's temple, where the Spirit lives in each heart.
We pray to the Lord.
3. For the world's desire for peace, that on this anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, 36 years ago today, all present walls - real, political and emotional - will be torn down and make way for bridges of hope.
We pray to the Lord.
4. For the Christians of Nigeria and Sudan who are enduring fierce persecution at this time, that they may be delivered from such distress and have restored to them the right to freedom of religion.
We pray to the Lord.
5. For the fragile peace process between Palestine and Israel, for an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine, and for relief for nations in the Caribbean severely affected by the recent cyclone.
We pray to the Lord.
6. For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, especially in our Diocese and in the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe.
We pray to the Lord.
7. For the souls of those listed on the envelopes that we have on the altar, and for all souls in purgatory who have no one to pray for them, that they may enter the heavenly city, Jerusalem.
We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

O Lord, our God hear a cause which is just, pay head to the cry of those suffering drought, and turn your ear to us.

Through Christ our Lord.