

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF ST. BARBARA'S CHURCH, POWELL,
WY, 31 AUGUST, 1965

This building, dedicated and set aside for divine worship, is an outward and visible sign of what all who believe in Jesus Christ are called to be. We are called to be living stones, built into the "place", the gathering of faithful minds and loving hearts, in which the truly saving Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is offered to God and made visible to the world.

The building in which God's people worship is important, but it takes its importance from them. It is not the dedicated building that makes the People of God sacred. It is the faithful and loving People who make their building sacred. This physical building has a foundation, and a cornerstone. The spiritual building that is the People of God also has a foundation, and a cornerstone. As St. Paul teaches us, our foundation is the entire teaching of God's prophets and apostles, and our cornerstone is Jesus Christ Himself, living and life giving.

The cornerstone is in place, and the foundation has been laid. It is up to us together to raise the building, all of us living stones helping each other take our place in the structure. No stone can be part of the building unless it is willing to accept the cornerstone and the foundation. Apart from the cornerstone and the foundation, a rebellious stone is just a rock lying on the ground. We erect God's living Temple, made up of living stones, by helping each other have Faith in Jesus Christ the cornerstone. We erect God's living temple by helping each other be loyal to the whole line of saints who have gone before us in this world, the long succession of prophets and apostles who are the living Temple's living foundation.

This visible place, dedicated to divine worship on 31 August, 1965, is focused on the Altar. God's living Temple, built of living stones, is also focused on the Altar. God's living Temple has a living Altar, namely Jesus Christ's continual Offering of Himself to His Father for us and for the whole world. Jesus Christ offers Himself only once, but that once is continual. The blood and pain of the Offering were for a mere day, but the love and power of the Offering are forever. Day and night, we join our pleas and supplications to the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offering them to God by putting them on the Altar of Jesus Christ's Offering of Himself.

The visible Altar of this building is a visible sign of the one, continual Offering of Jesus Christ. On this visible Altar, the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is made present for us in a visible way, not re-enacted like theater, but re-presented in a sacred ritual. Jesus Christ Himself taught us this sacred ritual at His Passion Supper, saying of the Bread "This is My Body", and of the Wine "This is My Blood", and then adding "Do This in Memory of Me". As we offer Bread and Wine in memory of His Sacrifice, His Sacrifice is mystically but really made present, and the Bread and Wine are mystically but really changed into the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb! Those who receive faithfully and lovingly from this earthly Altar become living stones in God's eternal Temple.

What holds the living stones of God's living Temple together? They are held together not by mortar but by Charity. The stones of God's true Temple will not cohere with each other unless they love each other. When a building is well constructed, you aren't afraid that it is going to collapse on you. God's living Temple is well constructed when it is built in love.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, wanting to live in us and to make us together into His mystical Body, the Living God's living Temple, says "I give you a new commandment, that you love another." Love one another! Not loving each other, we can only pull apart from each other

and cause the whole building to collapse. If we don't want to be an eternal ruin, we must love one another.

Here, in this visible building, we hear and receive the invisible love of God. By that love, and only by that love, we can build His true, living Temple on earth. The people of the old Temple entered that sacred building singing "Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all the earth." What is the new song of the new, living Temple? The new song is the same as the new commandment: Love one another. Beautifully and wisely, the great St. Augustine once observed that "Singing pertains to loving" To love is to sing, in the end. Ultimately, in the Presence of the God Who is Love, singing and loving come perfectly together. Our physical voices may not all be beautiful, but sing anyway, because the love each one has is beautiful, and that love is our true song.

Here, in this building, we see the sacred rites and re-present our Salvation in Christ. May what we see visibly exist spiritually in our minds. To be human is to have a body, and no human thing can be without physical expression. By God's Grace, may the Faith and Love we express physically here in sacred rites grow daily in our minds.

Thanks be to God, the giver of every good gift. He has allowed us to build this House of Prayer in which He visits His faithful People, arousing their love and giving His Grace. Day after day and week after week, may the Good Lord inspire us in this place to make ourselves, all together, a living Temple in which the world can see the love of God made visible. Surely, the world needs to see that love made visible. "You are the light of the world!" To make that love visible is our vocation and our mission. If we sincerely accept this mission, the Lord will enable us to accomplish it, by the word and Grace we receive in this place. Here, in this place, and on this day, the Lord begins a good work in us. May we so cooperate with Him that this good work of love comes to perfection.