

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, November 9, 2025

Relationships begin to break down when we start to see the other as a means rather than an end. We see this even in international relations, where in the context of wars, one party says to the other, “I want that land. I want your resources.” And then they make efforts to take it, to seize it. We see it on the national scene in which political opponents cannot seem to have the productive dialogue, but rather they say to one another, “I want you to consent to the way I want to do things. I want your vote. You should vote the way I want to vote.” We see it in marriage and family. We see it in our personal relationship of all kinds, asking ourselves, “What good does this relationship really do for me? What do I need out of this?”

People, human beings, become cogs in the great machine that is our vision and our plan for life. Our notion of how things should go. This is dangerous enough for timid relationships but even more dangerous for our relationship with God. In the Gospel today, Jesus goes in the temple, and He is angry. He is infuriated about what He finds there. He finds a spirit of business. He sees the money changers; He sees those animals for sacrifice. These are all there for the purpose of fulfilling the commandment of God to offer sacrifice, right? Animals are necessary. For foreigners, the changing of money would be necessary. But Jesus goes in and drives them all out in the temple area, overturns the table, spills the coins. And He says those famous words, “*Stop making my Father's house a marketplace.*” “*Stop making my Father's house a marketplace.*” The Father's house is not a marketplace. It is not meant to be a place of business, a place of transaction. The Father's house should be a place of encounter. It should be in place of rest. A place of enjoyment of being with God in love and union. The Father's house should have

the feeling of home. Not a marketplace where there is bartering, selling, and buying, a spirit of business, just things to get done, transactions to accomplish.

“My Father's house.” What does that mean to us? I profess I was not really all that good about visiting my parents when they were still alive and not even really all that good about calling them on a regular basis, and I regret that. But I think about the times that I went to their home, my childhood home and what my attitude was as I went to that place, I don't remember ever thinking that I could ‘check this off the box’, I visited my folks - I did my duty as a son. I mean, there were things that I needed to do about the house, so there wasn't in a sense, you know, there was work involved. But at the same time, this was their home and very much a sense that I was just there to be together with them. That we were there to enjoy each other's company and to enjoy the dynamics of this family that God had put together. To experience love, to experience goodness of one another. That is what I think about when those words, *“My Father's house.”*

Today is the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. It is not just a marking of an anniversary of the event in which this magnificent Cathedral/Basilica was dedicated. It really is a feast day of the Church. It is a day in which we really celebrate the gift that the Church is. Not just that church, but ‘the’ Church. So, we read all these Scriptures today - from Ezekiel and First Corinthians, and the Gospel of John - and our eyes are turned not exactly to the reality of the temple, but the reality of the Church, which is the new temple reality. The temple prefigured the Church, the place of encountering God, the place of entering into Communion with God, the place of being at rest in the Father's presence, being loved by God, and opening our hearts to receive the mercy and goodness of God.

We are thinking about this Church as the Father's house - a place where we can be together with God and with our brothers and sisters, who are part of the family. It is not a marketplace. This isn't a place for business. We don't come here to accomplish anything per se. We don't come to Church so that we can check this off of our list for this week.

We don't want to treat God like that. To treat God as a means rather than an end - to come to the Church and say, "Well, I need to get something from God." God gives us so much when we go to Mass. And yes, we bring our intentions; we bring all the desires of our hearts when we gather here each Sunday. But really it is about God. It is not so much about us. What a gift the Church is to provide a place and a community to experience being in the Father's house, and the rest and the joy that that is, that that entails. Just to be with God. To set aside for a moment our drive for production, and efficiency, and to accomplish things. Being efficient and accomplishing things is not bad, right? Things have got to get done. This is America, right? But to be able to set aside the drive for a moment and just be with God. Just be with God. What a gift that is.

The Church is also a school. The Church is a school of a sort in which we lovely learn how to be at peace and at rest and enjoy the presence of the Father in the Father's house. But we are learning how to stay in this place interiorly, even as we go out into the world. Out into the marketplace, if you will. Out into the place where there is so much that wants to tear our hearts out of this place, that place of rest, that place of being with the Father but we need to be in the Father's house, even if not physically here, the soul is, as we've heard in readings, "the dwelling place of God."

So, in that sense, we carry the Father's house with us. Our soul is the place where we have the indwelling of the Holy Trinity so the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit make their home in us. And how different things would be if we always operated out of that place of being with the Father through His Son, in the Spirit. Operating out of that place of rest and peace, and the enjoyment of His love and mercy which is present.

It is good for all of us to examine our hearts and to ask ourselves about why we bring ourselves to Mass each Sunday or even during the week for those who come more frequently? Do we sometimes come to Church with the intention of accomplishing something, getting something? Checking something off the list? Sometimes there might be something of that. The Lord invites us to refocus, to recenter our attention on the real reason we are here - to be with Him in the Father's house. To enjoy that presence of God, growing in union with Him and to learn how to take this experience out there.