

Dedication of Lateran Basilica

1. Today we celebrate the dedication of a Basilica in Rome – WHY?
 - Let me give you some history
 - In the early church the Apostles began to spread the Good News and the Church grew
 - There were no church buildings, people met in home churches
 - For 1st 100 years there were no bibles, people told stories of Jesus – word of mouth
 - But the church grew – and as it grew it met with persecution
 - i. Christians were thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, crucified for their faith
 - ii. BUT THE CHURCH GREW
 1. From Jerusalem to Corinth, to Philippi, to Ephesus – even to Rome
 2. Peter and Paul are martyred in Rome, thousands others
 3. BUT THE CHURCH GREW
 4. More and more people accepted Christianity – even Emperor's house
 5. Until finally, around 300 – Emperor Constantine became Christian
 - a. Now in Rome there was a palace The Lateran Palace
 - b. The Christian Emperor Constantine gave it to the church
 - c. The Bishop of Rome's parish church (Pope)
 - d. The first Basilica in Rome – the Mother Church
 - e. Every year, on Nov 9, we celebrate Rome's 1st Church bldg.
 - So today, Scripture is full of readings about the temple – to teach us about being church
 - 1st – EZ – the prophet to lead Israel out of Babylonian captivity
 - i. EZ is given a vision of the Temple in Israel – where they were about to return
 - ii. The river of God flows from the temple, giving life
 - iii. Trees flourish, plants bear fruit, fish are abundant, even sea turns fresh
 - iv. Living water, flowing from the temple of God giving life
 1. What do we use water for in our church? BAPTISM
 2. Through Baptism we become members of Christian world
 3. Through Baptism we have life – abundant life, pressed down
 4. EZ is given a vision of life giving water flowing from the temple
 5. And this is what Israel is about to return to – GOOD NEWS!
 6. But is it the temple building that gives life?
 7. Is it our church building that makes us church?? **NO – we are church**
 - 2nd – 1COR – Paul tells us exactly that
 - i. Paul would go out and evangelize – he'd get a church off the ground & leave
 - ii. Town after town, Corinth, was one of those towns and he writes them a letter
 1. You are God's building
 2. Like a wise master builder I laid the foundation, now others build on it
 3. No one can lay another foundation – its already there – Jesus Christ
 4. Don't you know YOU are the temple of God & the Spirit of God dwells in YOU
 5. GOOD MORNING CHURCH – we are church – we are the temple
 6. The water of baptism flows over us and we flow out into the world
 7. Because of our faith, because we are church, the world sees fruit of HS
 8. Abundant life – full and complete – not because of a church bldg, but because WE ARE CHURCH
 - So now look at the Gospel
 - i. Look at the passion Jesus has for the temple
 - ii. We have to know that worship space is holy ground BUT
 - iii. Even Jesus refers to his body as the temple that he will raise up in 3 days
 - iv. WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD
 - v. WE ARE CHURCH
 - vi. The passion Jesus has for the temple is ALSO the passion He has for US
 - vii. WE ARE HOLY GROUND
 - viii. WE ARE WASHED BY THE WATER FLOWING FROM THE TEMPLE (Is)
 - ix. We are Consecrated, Dedicated, Anointed and Blessed – WE ARE CHURCH