

# BEING CHURCH



## DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

Year A

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12  
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9  
1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17  
John 2:13-22

### Gathering

*(An unlit candle, a bible open to this week's gospel, index cards (one for each member) and pens/pencils rest on a table covered in a green cloth.)*

This week we commemorate the dedication of the Lateran Basilica, the cathedral of the bishop of Rome. Last week we celebrated All Souls Day and we remembered our beloved dead. What action/prayer this week helped to sustain the memory of them?

### Prayer

*(The candle is lit. The index cards and pens/pencils are distributed. The leader asks each member to jot down in a few words write down a time when he/she felt most at home in church or perhaps at their diocesan cathedral. The prayer then continues as follows. The cards are placed under the candle after the prayer.)*

Leader: You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

All: With joy you will draw water from the fountains of salvation.

I: God indeed is my salvation;  
I am confident and unafraid.  
For the LORD is my strength and my might,  
and he has been my salvation.

*(Several members mention what they wrote on their cards.)*

II: With joy you will draw water  
from the fountains of salvation,  
And you will say on that day:  
give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;  
Among the nations make known his deeds,  
proclaim how exalted is his name.

*(A couple more mention what they wrote.)*

III: Sing praise to the LORD for he has done glorious things;  
let this be known throughout all the earth.  
Shout with exultation, City of Zion,  
for great in your midst  
is the Holy One of Israel!

Isaiah 12:2-6

*(The remaining members mention what they wrote.)*

All: Glory be the Father...

Leader: You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

*(Members join in singing, "All Are Welcome". The song may be found on the Internet.)*

## **HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL**

*(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them,*

but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: “**What draws you to this gospel?**” “**Where do you resist this gospel?**” The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

## Reflection

Every Catholic (arch)diocese in the world has a cathedral, some ornate and huge, others simple and more modest. The cathedral, from the Latin *cathedra* (seat, chair, throne), is where the bishop presides. It is the place from which he exercises his teaching authority. The Lateran Basilica is the cathedral church in Rome, the center of the Pope’s authority as bishop of Rome. Across the front of the Basilica is a Latin inscription: “This is the mother and head of all the churches in the whole world.”

We are challenged today not just to behold a cathedral and stare in awe at its beauty, but also to reflect on how we can *be church*. Fifty years ago, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II declared: “The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people...is their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (14).

We are called the *living stones*, which make up the church. Full, active participation means that there are no sidelines, since *being church* is not a spectator sport. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, just as surely as Jesus’ body is. In the cleansing of the Temple Jesus drives out those who mistreat the house of worship. There are many ways we mistreat our temples: apathy, greed, prejudice, and injustice, to name a few.

Today’s Gospel invites us to face what it means to *be church*, to live our faith in union with Jesus. How are we hindered by our reliance upon old patterns, or weakened by old sins? Jesus wants to free us for worship and mission/service, to give ourselves totally to the Mass and to our families and others in this world around us.

## Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ How “full, conscious, and active” is your participation at Mass?
- ◆ How involved are you in the life and mission of your parish?
- ◆ What might you need to “drive out” of your temple (self) or your life in order to be more faithful to Christ?

## HEARING THE GOSPEL’S LORD

*(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: “What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?” “How are you/we being called to live in response to God’s word?” After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)*

## Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Call your Cathedral office to arrange for a tour. Take a child or two in your life to participate in this tour. Pray for your bishop, the bishop of Rome, and all members of the Body of Christ.
- ◆ Pray for those alienated from the Church. Reach out to someone you know who is alienated and invite him/her to attend church with you at Thanksgiving or during the coming season of Advent.
- ◆ Read and reflect on *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy --

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204__sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html)

## Prayer

*(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: "What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now? What do you say to him in response?" The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may-*

*be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment. Following this sharing, the prayer continues as follows.)*

All: The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

Leader: God is our refuge and our strength,  
an ever-present help in distress.  
Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken  
and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

All: The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

Leader: There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,  
the holy dwelling of the Most High.  
God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;  
God will help it at the break of dawn.

All: The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

Leader: The LORD of hosts is with us;  
our stronghold is the God of Jacob.  
Come! behold the deeds of the LORD,  
the astounding things he has wrought on earth.

All: The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

*(Members are invited to offer prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer, members respond, “O God, you are our refuge and strength.” When these prayers are complete, members join hands to pray the Lord’s Prayer. The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)*