

November 9, 2014
Dedication of St. John Lateran - Cycle A
Father Larry Richards

Good Morning! Now, of course, I love the Gospel today but we will not discuss it. We will just let it go. But the reality is, the one thing I do want to focus on is they were focusing on buildings and He was focusing on Himself, His body. And so He was making it clear that the building is not truly the Church. It's part of it. Of course, the temple is holy, this church is holy but when we celebrate this, the feast of the Dedication of St. John Lateran, we celebrate the parish of the Holy Father. His parish church is St. John Lateran, not St. Peter's and that's where he's bishop from. We don't celebrate the building; we celebrate the whole Church under the guidance of our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

So, to focus on this most explicitly, the Second Reading is what we'll focus on today. It's in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 3, verse 16 is where we're gonna focus and begin here. And it says, "Are you not aware?" What? "Do you not know, are you not aware that you are the temple of God. That the Spirit of God dwells in you." So he begins by telling us who we are. You are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in us. So, that's what I want to focus on today and I want to focus on three things. First, if we are a temple of God that means first of all we are never alone. Second, as it continues on in verse 17, it says, "And the temple who you are is holy." So, the second thing we need to focus on is that we are holy by definition because we are temples of God. Then the third thing, if we are the temple of God, our job is to bring God to everybody we meet. OK?

Let's focus on the first part. If we are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells within us. That means that we are never alone. Loneliness is the biggest thing in the world today. It's amazing because more and more people the way they start interacting with others is through the internet and they can argue through the internet, and they can meet their friends on the internet. I even had a cousin who left her husband because of someone she met on the internet. How long do you think that lasted? Yeah – not very long. So, we let other things try to fill up that emptiness. The internet, other things, none of those things make us feel that we're not alone, it increases our loneliness. It shows how disconnected we are with everybody. But, when you and I start realizing that I am never alone because God lives inside of me that means when you wake up in the middle of the night, when you feel alone, you're not. Just refocus – Jesus, you live inside of me.

That's what happened when we got baptized. God took up residence in us. But again, as Catholics, we try to keep ourselves separated from this reality. You know, the church is holy. I'm not. The church is where God dwells. I don't so as soon as I leave this church, I can do

anything I want. No! God is always inside of us from the moment we got baptized. That is the teaching of the Church. So, you and I are never alone. We're always loved. We're always cared for. No matter what, God dwells in us.

The second thing is because God dwells within us that means we have been set apart for God and that's what holiness means. So, when Paul says, "You are that temple and you are holy," right before that he says, if anyone destroys that temple, then what's God gonna do to them? Destroy them. So, this has a couple implications. The first implication means that if we're holy, we gotta do temple maintenance. Temple maintenance means we need to take care of our bodies because it's the temple of God. Not because of vanity, not because it's healthy for me. It's because, you don't belong to yourself, you belong to God and your body is His temple. He gave you your body for Him. So, how do you treat His temple? Do you treat it the way it should be treated? Do you treat it with dignity? Do you treat it in a way that you eat the right foods?

Now this is hard for me being a diabetic. I love chocolate but when I take chocolate into my temple, it messes my temple up. I still cheat with chocolate! The reality is this – how do you and I, do I treat my body as the place where God dwells or do I dismiss it? Do I say well the body isn't important? Well, the body is important; God gave it to you. He created it. The first thing God did after He created the heavens and the earth and all the animals is He created the human body. The human body, as John Paul II used to talk about again and again in the Theology of the Body, we are the place where God dwells so we need to treat our bodies as temples.

The second thing we need to do if that happens and we are a temple of God's spirit is if we are holy, we need to be living as holy people. Again, when he talks about the spirit is within you, we're going to go just a couple more chapters in 1 Corinthians and we're going to go to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 6, verse 15. Here's what it says, "A little bit later," and Paul continues about this, he says, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" You got this? So, not only are we temples of the Holy Spirit but we are of the church of Christ. We are members of Christ – every one of us and again in 1 Corinthians 12 it does this again. But then he says, "Shall I then take Christ's member and make them one with a prostitute? Of course not," it says in verse 15. Verse 16 – "Do you not realize that anyone who joins himself with a prostitute becomes one body with her? So then, whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him."

So, what's he saying? When you and I sin, we make Jesus sin. You understand? He's not up there looking down at you and saying, "Oh, what you are doing is wrong." He's inside of you and then it goes on. "Avoid immorality. Every sin a person commits is outside of his body. The immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God and that you are not your own? For you have

been purchased and at what a price?" What's the price we are purchased with – the blood of Jesus Christ? "Therefore, glorify God in your body."

So again, we grow in holiness but we are holy by definition and so we need to treat our bodies as the temple of God. We need to know that anytime you and I sin, we make Jesus do that within us. So, it's almost like a sacrilege right? Because if you and I would come up here and do something on this altar immoral in front of the tabernacle, everybody would have a heart attack. We would talk about it. It would be in all the papers – it's horrendous, horrendous. But, every time you and I sin immorally, we do the same thing as if we were to do it up here in front of the tabernacle because you and I have God dwelling within us. So, when you and I start getting this truth of the Gospel – this isn't something you can decide or not decide. "Well, I don't really know if I agree with you." You don't have that option. You agree with God or you don't. That's His word I read to you, not mine. You are the place where God dwells. So, whenever you and I sin, we make Christ commit that sin. So, you and I have to make sure that we treat our bodies as a place where God dwells and I become a person of integrity – that I am who I am no matter where I am because Jesus always is within me.

The last part of this being a temple of God is that if I'm never alone, if Jesus lives inside of me so I'm holy and the Spirit lives inside of me so I'm holy, now my job is to bring Jesus to everyone I meet. We cannot leave Jesus here in the tabernacle. We need to take Jesus with us. Every time we walk out the doors, we take Christ with us. And everybody asks us the same thing, "Sir or Ma'am, we want to see Jesus, we don't want to see you" and that's the hard part – that we show the world Jesus. Now again, each of us will show Jesus in a different way. Some of you will be real gentle and joyful and others of us will be a little bit stronger and not so joyful. You know, I do have joy dimples – did you ever notice? That comes from my joy.

So the reality is that we do and we bring Christ to others. That's our call. That's what we've been ordained by God to do – ordained meaning that when you and I were baptized, He sent us out to do something – to bring the world to Jesus Christ. He's already inside of us so bring Him to others that they, too, may have Christ living inside of them. So the three things we mean when we say we are temples of God are we are never alone, we are holy so we have to act like it and then we have to bring Him to others. You got it? You got it? You gonna do it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.