

Homily for the 32nd Sunday OT, Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, the Church celebrates Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. This Feast is about what the Church is, and who we are; it reminds us that the true dwelling place of God is not made of stones and bricks, but it is found in the hearts of His people, in whom the Holy Spirit lives and works.

A young boy from rural area once visited a beautiful Church in the city with his parents. As they entered, the young boy exclaimed, “Wow, this is God’s house!” But as the Mass went on, he saw people chatting, scrolling on their phones, and rushing out before the final hymn. Later the young boy asked, “If this is God’s house, why does it feel like nobody’s home?” in other words, “Why people are rushing to get out as if they are not in their Father’s house?”

This innocent question of the young boy captures something that Jesus felt when He entered the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was meant to be a place of Prayer, where people could encounter God, but what He found in there was noise, business, and greed. The sacred place, the sacred space had become the marketplace.

Then Jesus decided to purify the Temple: He drove out the merchants, overturned tables and scattered coins, and He cried out, “Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!”

This shocking moment is not about violence, but about zeal, a passionate love for God’s presence. Jesus’s actions revealed that worship had lost its heart, religion had become routine, and the Temple was being used for profit instead of Prayer.

When Jesus said, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up”, he was pointing to Himself. His body would become the new Temple, the True Dwelling place of God among us.

So, dear brothers and sisters,

What would Jesus cleanse in our Church today?

- Perhaps He would challenge our indifference, when we treat our faith as a habit instead of a relationship.
- Maybe He would overturn the tables of Clericalism, where authority is used for power instead of service in some countries.
- He might call for synodality: a Church that listens, walks together, and gives a greater voice to all the people whose gifts, talents and leadership must be valued.
- Jesus would also remind us that the poor are not guests in the Church, but that they are its heart, they are in its heart, they belong there.

Dear brothers and sisters,

The purification of the Temple is an invitation: Jesus invites us to let God's love overturn anything in our hearts that hinders worship, justice and compassion. Are we ready to let Jesus enter the Temples of our hearts, overturn what is false, and restore what is holy?

When we allow Him to cleanse us, to purify us, then the Church becomes again what it was always meant to be: a house where God truly feels at home.

May this feast remind us that the Church is not just a place we go, it is who we are. And may we, as members of Christ's Body, be holy, united, and alive with the Spirit of God.

May the Lord make us living Temples of His presence, and may His Church be a fountain of grace for the world.

May God bless us all!