Balta Lelija

9 November 2026

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
"The Temple of God"

Jn 2:13-22

When the time of the Jewish Passover was near Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the dove sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us that you should act like this?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?' But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said.

Our Lord is zealous when it comes to defending His Father's honor. The House of God cannot become a marketplace and nothing foreign should be in it. It is a House of prayer, a place where the Lord is glorified and where man can meet God in a special way. This counts to this day for our temples, and we should repeatedly examine whether the House of God is being used for other purposes that do not serve His glory.

Praise and holy silence, worthy liturgical celebrations, prayer and attentive listening to the Word of God, communion in the Holy Spirit, spaces that shine forth beauty and recollection... All these belong in the House of God. On the other hand, neither noise nor dispersion, neither worldly conversations nor other events that do not correspond to the purpose of a temple are fitting within it.

In today's Gospel, the Lord also shows us another element. Holy reverence and love are necessary for being in a visible temple. But Jesus speaks of the building of another temple, which is His Body, and that Body is us. St. Paul himself points out this reality

to us when he says: *"Do you not realise that you are a temple of God with the Spirit of God living in you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy that person, because God's temple is holy; and you are that temple"* (1 Cor 3:16-17).

So, if the Lord is so zealous with the purification of the temple in its external dimension, how much more so will He be with the purification of the interior temple! How willing we must be to allow ourselves to be purified by God, so that His Spirit may drive away everything that defiles us interiorly! He cannot tolerate that we maintain in our interior ungodly thoughts, feelings and actions. That is why He admonishes us, often silently but insistently, to turn away from them and overcome them. His voice can become louder and more pressing when we are in grave danger of giving our consent to such thoughts, feelings or actions; or when we do not decisively reject them with our will.

The glory of a temple (referring here to the visible building) and the dignity of the House of God allow us to understand more easily how great an honor it is that we ourselves are temples of the Lord. Indeed, it is incredible that He - the Holy One - chooses us, humans, as a temple to dwell in and make it His paradise, in a sense.

Perhaps we can understand something of this mystery of love by thinking of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Incarnation of the Word. Through the Holy Spirit, God Himself, in the Person of His Son, stooped to dwell in the Virgin's womb. Therefore, He wished to dwell in us, thus offering us this indissoluble bond in order to remain united to Him.

This event happens now in every person who accepts His invitation and allows themself to be fully transformed by Him.

To be a temple of God! To be a dwelling place for Him who is the Holy One! To be called to friendship, to a filial and even spousal relationship with Him. Could our loving Father have honored us more?

If only we could understand this mystery more deeply. How careful we would then be to allow nothing in us that would oppose His Most Holy Presence. How neatly we would clean our inner house for Him and adorn it with virtues. If we prepare everything with care to receive an earthly guest, how much more must we do it for the Heavenly Guest!

We are well aware that we are in need of a profound purification and that we have not yet reached the point we would like to reach one day. We also know that our temple is not yet adorned as befits the dignity of God's presence. But all this should not discourage us.

The Lord knows our weakness and we can offer Him our sincere efforts and present our hearts to Him. Our Heavenly Guest does not wait until we are fully purified to come and dwell in us. Rather, He purifies us through His Spirit as we cooperate with Him. We could say that He Himself "gets down to work", for only He can cleanse us to the greatest depths; those that we are not even able to distinguish.

The important thing is that we welcome our Heavenly Guest and sit at His feet as Mary, Martha's sister, did (cf. Lk 10:39). If we are attentive to His Word, if we understand Him better and follow His instructions, God will be able to dwell in us and make us His beloved temples.

And the zeal of the Lord will watch over us, so that we will not tolerate anything impure within us. Thus, our heart will be more and more awakened to love and God will be glorified in His temple.