

HOMILY
THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA
November 9, 2025

Today we celebrate the dedication of the Lateran Basilica. How many of you have been to Rome? If you have you have probably visited the Lateran Basilica. It is definitely a tourist attraction. I was going to show you some pictures of the Basilica, but pictures just do not do it justice. You have to see it in person to truly appreciate the work of art that it is. Many of the churches of Rome are like art museums and they are very well maintained partially because the Italian government maintains most Catholic Churches. The Lateran Basilica is the cathedral church of the pope, the head of the Archdiocese of Rome; in fact it was the primary residence of the pope until the middle ages. It was consecrated in 324 AD. It was damaged by fire and rebuilt in 16th century and remodeled in 1735. It is named after the Laterani family who donated the property that it is built upon. It is dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Five Ecumenical Councils were held there. It had great historical significance.

My guess is that you have not been to the churches in a very poor area in Recife, Brazil. I visited them. I was going to show you some pictures of them but I could not find them on the internet. They are not a tourist attraction. You would not consider them art museums, in fact there are no works of art of any kind in them; some of them do not even have pews. Nothing of historical importance happened in them. However important things happen there every day. They are certainly the center of community in those small towns. It is where people gather to pray, to worship and to support one another. Quite a contrast to the Lateran Basilica.

There is beautiful imagery in the first reading today. Water is flowing from the temple, emptying into the sea turning salt water fresh. The water nourishes all of the fish and animals and

they flourish. Fruit trees of every kind never fade and their fruit serves as food and their leaves as medicine. Maybe it is what happens in our churches and what flows from them that is more important than the art, architecture and history.

Organized religion and church attendance is on the decline nationally. That is not true at St. Edith. Our registered parishioners and attendance at Mass grows just a little every year. Something really important happens when we come to Mass each weekend. We encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, in the readings from Sacred Scripture and in the congregation. Hopefully everyone feels spiritually nourished. We do everything we can to welcome everyone. We really work hard to make sure the music is good, the environment is pleasing and comfortable and hopefully a homily that gives you something to think about. People who do not come to Mass regularly sometimes say it is repetitive and boring. I think that is good. At least part of the time you are here it is good for you to be bored. It is the one hour that you are not looking at your phone and your mind does not need to be racing a mile a minute. You can give yourself permission to do nothing. Spend some time just being, just relaxing, not doing anything. Just being with a whole group of faith filled people. After all we are human beings not human doings. We have something social after every gathering at the church. Take some time to get to know people here. We have really great people at St. Edith.

Come to Mass regularly, encounter Jesus, take some time to be bored and just be, and interact with the people here. If you do that I think you will be less anxious, less lonely and less depressed. We have a lot of service activities here. Get involved in one of them. You will feel better. And when you leave here you will be way more likely to live a life that is life giving, like the water that flowed from the temple. The next time someone tells you that they do not go to church because it is boring, tell them how good boring is for them. Tell them why you come to Mass.