



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Overview

The Basilica of St. John Lateran is the cathedral church of the Bishop of Rome—the Pope. It is the official ecclesiastical seat of the Pope. Today's feast celebrates the unity of all local churches with the Church of Rome—the heart of our Catholic communion.

The Basilica was dedicated in 324 A.D. by Pope Sylvester I after Emperor Constantine granted Christians freedom of worship. Its dedication marks the end of persecution and the Church's visible establishment in society. With this feast, we celebrate the Church coming out of hiding into open mission—no longer confined to catacombs, but now at the heart of the city.

The true temple of God we celebrate today is not made of marble or stone—it is us, the Christian community. As St. Paul tells the Corinthians, "You are God's building...Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

This feast encourages us, as the Eucharist nourishes us, to step out of our own shadows and live our faith more openly and courageously. If our discipleship has been hidden or quiet, this feast calls us to make it visible. The Lateran Basilica stands not only as a building in Rome, but as a sign of what we are called to be: a holy people, concrete and visible witnesses of Christ's risen life in the world.

READINGS

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 47.1-2, 8-9, 12

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The angel ¹ of the Lord brought me back to the entrance of the temple ²; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east ³, for the temple faced east; and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east, and the water was coming out on the right side.

He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah ⁴; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh.

Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. "On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing." The word of the Lord.



A period of silence is observed after the reading.

¹ Messenger

² The central place where God dwelt in the midst of his people to the people of Israel

³ "East" associates with sunrise .

⁴ A region in Israel that includes the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea area, stretching to Elath and the Gulf of Aqaba. Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 62.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 46.1-2, 4-5, 7-8 (R.4)

R. The streams make glad the city of God, home of the Holy One Most High.

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea. **R.**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns. **R.**

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what awesome things he has brought on the earth. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3.9b-11, 16-17

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters,

you are God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me,

like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation,

and someone else is building on it.

Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.

For no one can lay any foundation

other than the one that has been laid;

that foundation is Jesus Christ.

Do you not know that you are God's temple

and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

If anyone destroys God's temple,

God will destroy that person.

For God's temple is holy,

and you are that temple.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

The Passover ⁵ of the Jews was near,
and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves,
and the money changers seated at their tables.
Making a whip of cords,
he drove all of them out of the temple,
both the sheep and the cattle.
He also poured out the coins of the money changers
and overturned their tables.
He told those who were selling the doves,
"Take these things out of here!
Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"
His disciples remembered that it was written,
"Zeal for your house will consume me."
The people then said to him,
"What sign can you show us for doing this?"
Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple,
and in three days I will raise it up."
They then said,
"This temple has been under construction for forty-six years,
and will you raise it up in three days?"
But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body.
After he was raised from the dead,
his disciples remembered that he had said this;
and they believed the Scripture
and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The gospel of the Lord.

⁵ One of the most important feasts of the Israelite calendar. The word "Passover" is an echo of the verb *pâsah*., "pass over," indicating that the feast was instituted to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt when the angel of death passed over the Israelites' firstborn (Exod 12:13, 23, 27) Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 679–680.

Background

Ezekiel 47 is often referred to as the "River of Life" or the "Water from the Temple," because it is a powerful prophetic image of restoration, life, and healing that flows from the new Temple. This foreshadows the life-giving grace of Christ, particularly through the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, as well as the Church's mission.

Psalms 46 presents a powerful hymn of unwavering confidence in God, who is portrayed as an ever-present refuge and the sovereign Lord over all creation and history.

1 Corinthians 3 brings together three tightly linked images: the Christian community as God's field and building, the foundation of Christ, and the believers themselves as the temple of the living God. In the Pauline context, these images form a unified theological vision: the Church is the place where God's work of salvation is accomplished, and every member shares in the responsibility of constructing a worthy edifice that will withstand the test of divine judgment.

John 2.13-22 records the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry, an event that serves as a pivotal moment in John's Gospel. It is a prophetic action that introduces the central theological theme of Jesus as the New Temple and the inauguration of the new covenant, in which the Church becomes the dwelling place of God. The cleansing of the Temple is not merely a moral protest against corruption, but a prophetic act of replacement and inauguration and three critical theological points:

- 1) The Authority of Jesus: Jesus exercises divine authority over the sacred space, challenging the established religious order.
- 2) The End of the Old Covenant: The physical Temple and its sacrificial system are superseded by the living body of Christ.
- 3) The New Dwelling of God: The Resurrection of Christ's body inaugurates the New Temple, which is the Church, where God dwells and where true worship "in spirit and truth" takes place.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Dismissal

Priest: Dear children, even though we pray in God's house, it is important to remember that God also dwells within us. Go now in peace to let Jesus dwell within you.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the celebration location, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may recite the following prayer, or similar words.

Let us pray:

Pause for 5 – 10 seconds

**O God, who from living and chosen stones
prepare us as an eternal dwelling,
increase in your Church a spirit of grace,
so that by new growth
we may build the Church.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

ADAPTED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 47.1-2, 8-9, 12

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The angel brought me back to the entrance of the temple;
where water was flowing
from below the temple to the east and south.

Then he brought me out to the north gate.

He said to me,

"This water flows and goes down into the Arabah;
and when it enters the sea,
the water will become fresh.

Wherever the river goes,
every creature will live,
and everything will live where the river goes.

"On the banks, on both sides of the river,
there will be many types of trees.

Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail,
but they will bear fresh fruit every month,
because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.
Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 46.1-2, 4-5, 7-8 (R.4)

R. The streams make glad the city of God.

God is our refuge and strength,

He is our help when we are in trouble. **R.**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.

God is in the midst of the city **R.**

The Lord is with us;

Come, behold the works of the Lord. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3.9b-11, 16-17

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

My dear children,
you are God's building.
According to the grace of God,
like a skilled master builder, God laid a foundation.
Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.
For no one can lay any foundation
other than the one that has been laid;
that foundation is Jesus Christ.
Do you know that you are God's temple
and that God's Spirit dwells in you?
For God's temple is holy,
and you are that temple.
The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple he found people selling animals,
and merchants conducting business.

He drove all of them out of the temple,
including the animals.

He said, "Take these things out of here!
Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

The people then said to him,
"What sign can you show us?"

Jesus answered them,
"Destroy this temple,
and in three days I will raise it up."

The gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear?

Let me tell you a story. One sunny Sunday morning, Mia and her little brother Leo walked into their church with their mom and dad. The big stone walls, colourful windows, and tall candles made it feel so special.

"Why is the church so important?" Leo whispered.

Why do you think the Church is important?

Mia smiled. "Because it's God's house!"

The priest began Mass by saying, "Today we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica — the oldest church in Rome! It reminds us that the Church isn't just a building. It's made of people — people who love God."

Did you know that you are part of the Church?

Mia thought about that. "So... we're part of the Church too?" she whispered to her mom.

Her mom nodded. "Yes, sweetheart. Every time you pray, help someone, or forgive, you're building God's Church."

After Mass, Mia noticed a woman helping someone in a wheelchair, and her friend Emma sharing her snack with a younger child. She smiled and said softly, "They're building the Church too!"

Can you think of any other ways you can help build the Church?

That night, before bed, Mia prayed, "Dear Jesus, thank You for Your Church — the big one in Rome, this Church we are in, and the little one in my heart. Help me to keep them full of love and kindness every day."

And as Mia drifted off to sleep, she imagined tiny lights shining all over the world — one in every heart where Jesus lived — all connected together, forming one beautiful, living Church.

Message for Children: The Church is not only a building of stone — it's made of people filled with love. Every kind word, prayer, and good deed helps build God's living temple in the world.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray to the Lord.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Today, we celebrate that we are all part of God's great Church. Let us pray with thankful hearts. Our response will be: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that all who believe in Jesus will grow together in love and peace. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
2. For Pope Leo and Bishop Joseph: that God will bless them as they lead the Church with kindness and wisdom. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
3. For our parish, that we will be like living stones, building a church of love, welcome, and joy. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
4. For our families and friends: that our homes will be filled with faith, laughter, and forgiveness, just like God's house. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
5. **The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.**

Leader: Loving God, we thank You for making us Your living Church. Help us keep our hearts pure and our hands ready to serve. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Liturgy adapted for Children.

All rights reserved. Prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2025

Acknowledgments:

LECTIONARY SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2500 Don Reid Drive Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2