

***The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica***  
***November 9, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“The Church’s task is to help people to properly orientate the whole temporal order and direct it to God through Christ. Thus the Church makes herself the servant of mankind and lay people ‘participate in the mission of service to the person and society.’”*  
*(Pope Saint John Paul II, General Audience, April 13, 1994)*

This weekend we are offered the opportunity to remember the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. The Lateran Basilica was built upon land donated in approximately 324. It is considered the “Mother and Head of All churches of Rome and the rest of the world.” Lastly, it has been honored as the “Pope’s Church” since the 1,700’s and was the residence of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) until the move to Avignon around 1,300. All this being said, I would like to direct your attention to our bulletin insert if you would like more information upon the history of Saint John Lateran Basilica.

I would like to redirect our thoughts from the physical structure and its history toward a more spiritual reflection upon “Church.” We use this term frequently, “We are the Church, the Body of Christ, the people of God,” but what does this word mean for us?

A few years ago, Deacon Groves, in a homily, used an example of a brick structure as he described “church.” He spoke of us as the bricks being held together by the mortar of the Love of God (the Holy Spirit). I like this image and, borrowing from it, I would like to approach our subject through this lens.

We may begin by affirming the physical nature of “church.” A church is a physical building consecrated to give honor and praise to God. Yet, it is so much more than just this one image. A “church” is also the members of this building. It is a family. The family of God with Jesus as its Head and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is a family infused, overflowing with the Love of God. It is joy filled and desires to share this joy with everyone who is able to be a part of the family. Each person (brick) should desire to be interconnected with others (other bricks) through this binding Love of the Holy Spirit. And, similar to certain building styles, each brick in the structure is unique because each person is unique. Coupled with this, each section of the wall is unique because each generation is unique and, guided by the Holy Spirit, adds its own identity. These various degrees of history and individuals add to the beauty of the structure as it rises toward its ultimate destiny.

In our time, we have been offered the opportunity to be added into this great structure. Each person, no matter the circumstances of their lives, through their Baptism into Jesus can become an integral part of this “church.” Never think you are too small and insignificant to be a part of Jesus’ Church. You are necessary. And, lest we forget, so are those who are not here this

day. They are part of the “Church.” They may need encouragement to return and this is something each of us can do. We can encourage them and, if necessary, challenge them to return and strengthen the structure of the Church. One brick removed from a wall may seem acceptable, yet if we allow other bricks to likewise be removed, then does not the structure become all the more weak? Thankfully, the Love of God will not allow the Church to crumble, but it would be a shame if we do not try our best to find and return those lost bricks to their proper place within the structure of the Church, the Body of Christ.