

FEAST OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

The dedication of a new church is an impressive ceremony. The bishop walks round sprinkling the walls with holy water. He anoints the altar with oil and then celebrates the Holy Eucharist, installing for the first time the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle, the heart of the building. The whole liturgy recalls our own baptism, confirmation and First Holy Communion by which we are inserted into the Body of Christ: cleansed by the water of baptism, anointed with oil in Confirmation, and filled with Christ Himself in Communion. Indeed, just as a church is the gate of heaven, a house of prayer, a place where God dwells, so too in Christ are we. This is why today's Gospel is truly challenging, when Jesus made a whip out of chord and cast out from the Temple the traders, the clutter and the baggage. So too each day, we should clear out from our hearts and minds sin and selfishness and return to the one thing necessary for our happiness, the love of God.

WHEREVER THE RIVER GOES EVERY LIVING CREATURE WHICH SWARMS WILL LIVE. We pray today for Sr. Mary Thomas making her solemn profession. This most beautiful and very moving Liturgy unfolds like a mystical marriage-rite between a bride and her Groom, as the newly consecrated sister, vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience, gives herself totally to Christ for his service in this community. Indeed, just as Jesus lays down his life for us on the altar, so too Sr. Mary Thomas lays down her life for Him. As Christians, all of us must put Christ first, must put Him at the centre of our lives, must develop with Jesus a personal-passionate relationship. Today's Liturgy reminds us of this, and also that every Christian is called in some way to spiritual poverty, chastity and obedience: to live an uncluttered life-style, to live a life that's pure, to live under the Word of God, coming to us through the Church's scriptures, Tradition and magisterium. Indeed, today's feast of the Lateran Basilica dedicated to Christ our Saviour, the Pope's own church, invites us to renew our love for Christ, our communion with the Church, and our continuous prayer for the Holy Father.

The secular world we live in is full of great potential, wonderful things; it makes life busy, absorbing, bright. But like the lights of a city at night, it can easily block out the sacred canopy of God, heaven, happiness and the life of the world to come. Yet what is happening here today is an arresting reminder of what is most important thing in life and it's my prayer that like THE WATER ISSUING FROM THE TEMPLE, we will not only often remember Sr. Mary Thomas in our prayers but also often look to the heavenly Jerusalem for which deep down our hearts longs. In our time, the Church is calling us to the work of new evangelisation, and this will make us countercultural people. For it means putting Christ not self at the centre. And poverty, chastity and obedience means, in a culture of affluence living more simply, in a culture which has redefined sex living the countersign of purity, and in a culture of relativism and personal opinion, obeying the Truth.

VENI FILIA, AUDI ME. COME O DAUGHTER LISTEN TO ME. Dear Sr. Mary Thomas, we pray for you today. We pray you will be full of happiness here. We pray for all your family and friends, and for this community. Please pray for us. Pray that our hearts may never be cluttered with worry and anxiety, the cares of life, money, work and play. May Christ be at the centre of our lives so that everything else can fall into place.