



**32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)
St Brigid's Church, Midland Parish, Golden Jubilee**

Homily

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

**Sunday 10 November 2019
St Brigid's Church. Midland Parish**

Yesterday the Church throughout the world celebrated the feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome. For those who don't know Rome, St John Lateran is one of the four major basilicas in Rome and is known as the Mother of all the churches. The historical reasons for this are many, but one of them is the fact that this church, rather than Saint Peter's Basilica, is the Pope's Cathedral Church. The Pope, of course, is the Bishop of Rome and just as St Mary's Cathedral in Perth is the church from which I as the Archbishop exercise my ministry for the people of our Archdiocese, so the Basilica of Saint John Lateran is the church from which the Pope exercises his ministry as the bishop of Rome.

It is perhaps coincidental, or perhaps part of God's providence, that one day after the feast of St John Lateran, you in this parish celebrate the feast of Saint Brigid's. It is not the feast of the founding of the parish, any more than yesterday was the feast of the founding of the Church in Rome. Those very important feasts are celebrated on other occasions. Rather today is the feast of a building, a very special building with a very special purpose, and therefore the feast of all those people who in the past and still today come to this special building for one purpose only: to encounter God.

The Prayer after Communion for yesterday's feast contains these words:

O God, who chose to foreshadow for us the heavenly Jerusalem through the sign of your Church on earth, grant, we pray, that by our partaking of this Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Son we may be made temples of your grace and may enter the dwelling place of your glory.

The Prayer after Communion for today's Mass contains these words:

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord, we give you thanks and beseech your mercy that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit, the grace of integrity may endure in those your heavenly power has entered.



These two prayers, taken together, capture very well I think why this building, St Brigid's Church, is worth celebrating because these two prayers help us to understand why we have not only this church building, but **the** Church, the living Body of Christ, the ongoing instrument of Christ's saving presence among us. This living Church, this sacrament of Christ's presence, is built not of bricks and mortar but of people and you, the community which gathers together here in this church to encounter God, you are this sacrament of Christ among his people for each other and for the wider community of your family, your friends, your colleagues and indeed of all you meet.

It is you who are called by God to be temples, living temples, of God's grace, as yesterday's prayer puts it. Just as the people of the Old Testament came into the presence of the living God when they entered the Temple in Jerusalem, so the Lord is calling you to live in such a way that when people encounter you, as individuals and as the Catholic community here in this part of Perth, they are, consciously or otherwise, encountering Jesus whose disciples you are. This is what it means to be a temple, a place, where God's Spirit dwells. It is, as today's Prayer after Communion will express it, to live the grace of integrity, faithfully and constantly.

This is both the challenge and the joy of being a disciple of Jesus. It is a joy because it is the pathway to a happy and fulfilled life. It is a challenge because we are all fragile, prone to selfishness and sin, and constantly in danger of not living with the integrity that our faith asks of us. And this, perhaps, is where once again we can think of the importance of this building. This is the place where you gather as a community to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. It is the place where not only babies but older people as well are reborn to new life in baptism. It is the place where people are given strength by the Holy Spirit through Confirmation to live their faith with courage. It is the place where people brought low by their own sinfulness find forgiveness, healing and hope in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And it is, of course the place where, week by week, we hear the Word of God proclaimed to us, we are strengthened by the faithful witness of those who gather with us to celebrate Mass, we are served by the generosity and availability of our priests who are a sign that the Good Shepherd never abandons us, and we receive the Lord, in Holy Communion, into our hearts and into our lives. He comes to us, he lives within us and, little by little, if we let him, he transforms us from within so that we can begin to see with his eyes, and hear with his ears and love with his heart. This is how we become temples of God's grace, this is how we can continue to live our faith with integrity, this is how we can become the community of disciples that the Lord is calling us to be.

Today we thank God for giving us this building, truly our home, the place where God's grace and God's love is poured out with so much generosity. May we always be ready to receive God's gift with joy.