Sunday, Nov 09, 2025

The Lord's living house

How often, when we speak of church, we have to clarify whether we mean the faith community or the building where that community gathers. The fact that the memorial of the dedication of the Church of St. John Lateran today replaces even the Sunday liturgy reminds us that our faith reaches into the clay from which we are made. We celebrate this building—the pope's own cathedral, the mother of all churches—remembering that human beings need things that appeal to the senses to remind us of spiritual values. Saint Augustine says that when the community of faith gathers "they are hewn out, as it were, from mountains and forests, like stones and timber; but by catechizing, baptism, and instruction they are . . . shaped, squared, and planed by the hands of the workers and artisans" and finally are made into a house for the Lord, "fitted together through love."

FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22 (671). *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*

Monday, Nov 10, 2025

Called to account

It's easy to fall into the habit of blaming others when things go wrong. But Jesus challenges us to take responsibility for our own actions. At the same time, Jesus calls us to hold each other accountable: "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). There's a tension here—justice and mercy—but they go hand in hand. For Saint Augustine forgiveness is a great gift we can give to others and ourselves: "There are many kinds of alms, the giving of which helps us to obtain pardon for our sins; but none is greater than that by which we forgive from our heart a sin that someone has committed against us." Avoid blame and focus on accountability and mercy, two sides of divine love.

Wisdom 1:1-7; Luke 17:1-6 (491). *"Wisdom is a kindly spirit, yet she acquits not the blasphemer of his guilty lips."*

Tuesday, Nov 11, 2025

A soldier of Christ

If conscientious objectors had a patron saint, it would be Saint Martin of Tours (316/317-397). Though Martin was born into a military family and named after Mars, the god of war, his conversion to Christianity led him to renounce military service and dedicate his life to the gospel. "I am a soldier of Christ," he said. "I cannot fight." Such a decision, then and now, is never easy for a soldier to make and, depending on the time or place, could lead to imprisonment (as it did for Martin), physical punishment, even death. As we rightly honor all those who have given military service to their country today, let us also remember those who have chosen to fulfill a different duty.

MEMORIAL OF MARTIN OF TOURS, BISHOP; VETERANS DAY

Wisdom 2:23–3:9; Luke 17:7-10 (492). *"When you have done all you have been commanded, say, '... we have done what we were obliged to do.'"*

Wednesday, Nov 12, 2025

Love rules

Jesus asks a good question in the story about the 10 lepers he cleansed after only one returned to offer thanks: Where were the other nine? We can only imagine they were off doing exactly what Jesus told them to do: showing themselves to the priests, a Jewish ritual prescribed for the healing of leprosy. The tenth man, a Samaritan, wasn't bound by Jewish law. So he was free to return and thank the Lord. When it comes to leading a virtuous life, it's always a safe bet to follow the law, but not at the expense of the good news of God's saving love. Christ's whole purpose for becoming human was to teach us that lesson. Remember that the next time you use church law as a crutch or a cudgel instead of a path that leads to the abundant love of Christ.

Wisdom 6:1-11; Luke 17:11-19 (493). *"Desire therefore my words; long for them and you shall be instructed."*

Thursday, Nov 13, 2025

Good deeds build the Kingdom

The word *kingdom*, found in the frequently used New Testament phrase "kingdom of God," comes from the Greek *basileia*, meaning "kingdom," "reign," or most literally "foundation." Jesus laid God's foundation among us, and Christians continue to build on that foundation through lives of love and service. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) desired to build her life on Christ: "Convert me, Jesus," she wrote in her diary, "for if you do not make me a saint, I will not know how to work in your vineyard." God's kingdom comes each time we do the right thing—fight a just cause, serve the needs of our community, follow God's command to forgive and show mercy. Without a desire to do God's will, we will, in the words of Mother Cabrini, "end by betraying God's interests, instead of rendering them successful."

MEMORIAL OF FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI

Wisdom 7:22b–8:1; Luke 17:20-25 (494). *"Behold, the Kingdom of God is among you."*

Friday, Nov 14, 2025

Prepare for final approach

Old cathedrals preserve images of a sea of flames in which men and women are paying the penalty for their dissolute living. Replace the word "penalty" with "preparation," and the idea of a "place" where souls are sent with the concept of a "process." That comes closer to how the church speaks of purgatory today. Purgatory is a process whereby each soul is prepared for glory. If God is Love, then anything unloving or unyielding in our spirits must be surrendered before approaching final union with the Lord. Start the winnowing process now and let go of all that isn't heaven ready.

Wisdom 13:1-9; Luke 17:26-37 (495). *"Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it."*

Saturday, Nov 15, 2025

Science and religion: let's talk

As scientists probe ever more deeply into the mysteries of life, some people of faith feel threatened by the new terrain being traversed. But rather than retreat from the field, believers do well to bring their faith and ethics to the dialogue. We can turn to Saint Albert the Great (1193/1206-80) for inspiration. Albert was a Dominican friar and priest famous for his advocacy of the peaceful coexistence of science and religion. Tutor to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Albert brought Aristotle out of the shadows of the Dark Ages and ushered in the modern era of scientific inquiry. If we believe that God is Lord of all creation, we have nothing to fear from the exploration of the mysteries of that creation.

MEMORIAL OF ALBERT THE GREAT, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9; Luke 18:1-8 (496). *"They beheld stupendous wonders."*

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