

Reflection on Wednesday of Week 13 Fr Euloge Kasine aa

Dedication of the Cathedral

On this day when we celebrate the dedication of the Cathedral, I invite you to meditate with me on the zeal for God's house. Scripture says: "Zeal for your house will devour me." We are called to continue to love and take care of our Churches as special places of the encounter with God and other people, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us ask for the Zeal for the house of our God and open our hearts to the love and mercy of God as we say: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Meditation on: Kings 8: 22-23.27; John 2: 13:22

The zeal for God's house

We believe that God is omnipresent. In other words, God can be encountered everywhere. But we also believe that there are special places where we can meet God in a special way. Among those places, we have churches. We come to church as a building because we believe that God is there in a special way to renew and sanctify us. We also come to Church to meet and encourage one another to face realities of life with faith, hope and love. In the Church, we strengthen one another in the faith.

The Church for us is a sacred place where together we learn God's justice and love. In the Church we thank God for justifying us by the death and the resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. In the Church, we thank God together for making us worthy to be called his sons and daughters in Jesus Christ. In the Church, we come to strengthen our fraternity and fellowship under the leadership of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

We need to go to holy places because there we rediscover together who God is and who we are. In a holy place we learn how to love God and neighbour in a concrete way by fulfilling our different responsibilities as God's Children and stewards of the world.

Jesus was shocked to see how people desacralized the holy place, God's house. A place which is meant to be a place where to learn God's justice and love, people reduced it to "a den of robbers" (Mt 21: 13). In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus said: "It is written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer.' But you are making it 'a den of thieves.'"

It was with zeal for God's house that Jesus drove all those unjust people out of the Temple. We might wonder and ask why did Jesus drive the money changers from the Temple and clear out those who were selling animals?

One of the reasons is that they were taking advantage of those who had travelled long distances to celebrate Passover. There was probably nothing wrong with selling animals or operating a legitimate money exchange, but, according to Jesus, these particular vendors were a "den of robbers" who undoubtedly charged exorbitant rates, thus taking advantage of those who seemingly had no other options.

Besides, the so-called "businessmen" were concentrated on selling and crowded out those who had travelled to worship. In doing so, these "businessmen" were perverting the purpose of the Temple itself. That is why Jesus exclaimed that they were turning the house of prayer into a den of thieves. Jesus was angry because men were perverting the use of his Father's house. The main purpose of the house of God is for prayer. In prayer we talk with God and ask him to make us righteous as he is righteous and kind in all his doings (Cf. Ps 145: 17).

It is good to come to Church to prayer together. Together we take new strategies to fulfil our different duties for the well-being of all. I know no-one will be happy to see people taking advantage of his or her brother or sister. Like Jesus, we need to take the defence of our brethren. Let no-one allow injustice be installed and taken as the normal way of living. Jesus did not tolerate injustice and all the kind. That is why he took courage to disperse the "den of robbers."

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Let our churches continue to be places of communion where we meet to encounter God and strengthen one another in faith, hope and charity. Together we will make an end to unjust and unfair systems in our societies. Let no-one take advantage of his brother and sister. We need to support one another. This should be done in prayer and in deeds.

Let the zeal for the house of God overwhelm us for justice and peace in the world and in the Church