

Reflection Thursday Week 31 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica 2023

The Lateran Basilica was built by the Emperor Constantine on the Lateran Hill in Rome about 324. The feast of its dedication has been celebrated in Rome on this date since the 12th century. In honour of the basilica, *“the mother and head of all the churches of the City and the World,”* the feast has been extended to the whole Roman Rite as a sign of unity and love for the See of Peter, which, as St Ignatius of Antioch said in the 2nd century, *“presides over the whole assembly of charity.”*

Jesus underlines in no uncertain terms that the Temple was a place of prayer and one can see the analogy with flowing water because prayer flows continually from the multitude of temples throughout the world. We are invited to reflect on ourselves as temples made so in baptism. We are temples where the Holy Spirit dwell. We are Bethel, a house of God. This is both an honour and a privilege. Calling the Lateran the mother of all churches shows us that its waters – prayers, graces, teaching, love – flow throughout the church and through all its people. It includes us and our prayers, the graces we receive, the teaching we are able to give and the love with which we live our lives, all of which add to this flow of goodness and love of God. Let us be proud to be chosen to fulfil this role.