



THE PASTOR'S POST

WHERE'S THE CHURCH?

Dear Parish Family:

Today we celebrate a unique feast of the Church - the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. It's the Pope's Church in Rome. Its existence dates back to the 300s. Is this where the Church is?

We find ourselves in the midst of a pretty harrowing time right now in the midst of our country related not just to immigration but in how we are treating our brothers and sisters. We are witnessing acts, by officials, based on skin color and language spoken frequently leading to violence in many forms. The Church has been pretty quiet. Only of late have we started to hear statements from bishops and church leaders for those on the margins. Is this where the Church is?

We see parishes -including this one - led by leaders whose weaknesses can cause hurt and pain. In some cases parishes are closing, people are walking away. We have fewer priests. Is this where the Church is?

The answer to each of the questions above is no, particularly when we pray with the Scriptures of today's liturgy. (Of course everything above is part of the Church.) The Scriptures are speaking to us about imperfect temples and people behaving poorly inspiring the anger and the grief of Jesus. I wonder if we might not get the same reaction if Jesus walked into some of our churches and cathedrals because of misguided action and words or a lack of action and care.

At the same time, the Scriptures show us something else. They show us the foundation has already been provided. That foundation is not a grand cathedral, the words or lack of words from a church leader or a strong or failing faith community. The foundation is Jesus Christ, for as St. Paul says, "for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

This is where the Church is - Jesus Christ.

So, today as we listen to these Scriptures and we prepare for the feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, can we each pray for this gift of discernment from the Holy Spirit? We pray first for ourselves that each of our words and actions, what we do and what we

fail to do comes always from our relationship with Jesus Christ. Even as I write this, I get a chill as I recognize that I do not do this enough. This might take some time so we need to be patient. Sometimes we want to act or react right away. Today, we pray for the gift of wisdom, to discern well what God is asking of us. This might at times call us to a place of quiet or a time of reaction, similar to what we see in the Gospel today. It must come from a place of great discernment. Here is the Church.

We can pray for others that they, too, will build off the foundation of Jesus Christ alone. We pray for the Pope and bishop at every Mass and frequently during the Universal Prayer. This is important. They absolutely need our prayers. Period. Full stop. Whether we agree or disagree, when we build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to pray for one another. The same extends beyond the Church. The Church prays for the transformation of global and national leaders. We pray they can discern better how Jesus is calling each one of us as we strive to live out the Gospel. Here is the Church.

This week we celebrate the feast of Mother Cabrini. I hope you're planning to come to Mass on Thursday and I hope you will take the Cabrini Pledge, a work of the United State Catholic Conference of Bishops. These are small ways we can be Church - building on the foundation of Jesus Christ and responding to his call. I cannot help but think of Mother Cabrini. She discerned well what God asked of her, even when it was not necessarily her plan. She struggled to find a religious community. She wanted to go to Asia but was asked to go to New York. She listened to the Church, she discerned God's will and responded...and inspired others to do the same. Lives saved and changed. Jesus Christ brought to others. Here is the Church.

May the same be true of you and me, in each one of us with Jesus as our foundation, may the Church be found.

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

