

offer up our praises to God by what is called the sacrifice of praise. We know that here at every Mass the one Sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made upon the Cross is offered. The Mass is not just something that we make up, but the Lord Jesus appointed that we worship God in a specific way. He established the Eucharist at the Last Supper, to make present His sacrifice in the Church.

But we can actually add something to that sacrifice. The sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made on the Cross is renewed in the Mass so that we may join ourselves to that sacrifice. The Lord Jesus offered Himself to the Father, and we unite ourselves to His sacrifice. Our offerings are acceptable because they are united with the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made.

What does that mean? It means that when we come to church, we actually participate in what is happening. It means that when we come to church, there are all those things that are on our hearts: what we are worried about, what makes us happy, what we are looking forward to, and so on. We keep in mind all those people that have asked us for prayers, or who need our prayers. We also come to praise God and thank Him for all that He does for us.

Now, we cannot all stand in the person of Christ and offer the sacrifice of the Mass. That is what those who are ordained bishops and priests are able to do. However, that does not mean that when we come to Mass, we have nothing to offer. We come and praise God with our songs. We listen with open ears and hearts to the Scripture readings that are proclaimed at Mass. The more that we participate, the greater will be the glory of this church and the glory of God.

God has given us faith, and He calls us to this church. We don't just have faith on our own, nor do we come to this church because we just decide to on our own. No, God gives us the faith that we need. It is God who draws us to Himself and brings us here. Even though human hands built this church, and human hands continue to maintain it, nevertheless we can recognize that God has built this church, that the faith that God has given us is what continues to bring us here and will continue to bring us here.

We pray today for our church, that it will continue to sustain us. We recognize that our church is a place of peace, a place of holiness and a place where we can come when we need to find God in our lives. This is a place where we come to offer to God what we can, and to receive blessings from Him. This is God's house, and we ask the Lord to help us to find in His house a home away from home. The Lord Jesus has told us, "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." Our prayer is that we can find our treasure and our hearts here.

Rev. Derek Fairman

Dedication of the church

This day, November 12, marks the anniversary of the dedication of our church. We celebrate this in the liturgy every year, and this year November 12 happens to fall on Sunday. Why is it important to celebrate the dedication of our church each year? What does it mean?

The first reading today recounts Solomon's prayer as the Temple in Jerusalem was dedicated. When Solomon commissioned the construction of the Temple, it was meant to replace the temporary dwellings or tabernacles that the Israelites had constructed for the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple consisted of an outer court, where people assembled to worship; an inner court, where the priests offered burnt sacrifices on the bronze altar and where the priests washed; the holy place or sanctuary, which contained the altar of incense and the table for the bread of the Presence and the menorah to be kept always burning; and the holy of holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. The Presence of God rested upon the Ark of the Covenant.

If we compare Solomon's Temple to our own church, we will see a number of similarities. This church is not an exact replica, of course, but there is a structure in any church that traces back to this Temple. What this means is that our church, and many other churches, do not stand alone but rather embody a history that is thousands of years old. Now, the Temple that Solomon built was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587. The people and priests could no longer worship there. Many people and priests were taken captive to Babylon. It seemed that much was lost at that time.

But the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem was not the end. The Jewish people continued to worship God even without a Temple. They read from the Law and the prophets. They also continued to sing the Psalms that were sung while in the Temple. The burnt offerings and the incense offerings were not the only way that the Israelites worshipped God. Yes, there were the various sacrifices that the priests offered, but there were the sons of Levi, or Levites, who also were involved in worshipping God in the Temple by the singing and playing of the Psalms. It was King David who initially appointed them. The details of their appointment and worship are found in the two Books of Chronicles.

The point is that in the midst of sorrow, the faith of God's people was not deterred. Even if they could no longer offer the various sacrifices they were used to in the Temple, they could still continue to offer something to God; so, they did. In a way, we do the same even now. We