

My Dear Parish Family,

Last Friday it was great to have many families stop by the Rectory on Halloween for trick or treating. There were families from both Mary of the Immaculate Conception and also St. Michael's. There were even a few saints that showed up!

This Sunday in the Church we celebrate a Feast Day that is not usually celebrated on a Sunday unless it falls on November 9th like today. It is the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. You might be wondering why are we celebrating the Feast Day of a Church Building? First off this Basilica is not just any Church; it is the Cathedral of Rome and that of the Pope. You may be surprised to know that St. Peter's Basilica is not. When you go to St. John Lateran you see this title, *The most holy Church of the Lateran, the Mother and Head of all the Churches of the city and the world*. As it is the Cathedral of Rome, it is also the World's Cathedral.

Here is a passage from the Divine Office on the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.

When the Emperor Constantine had by the Sacrament of Baptism received health both of body and soul, he promulgated a law allowing Christians throughout the whole world for the first time to build Churches. This holy work he encouraged not only by his edict, but also by his example. For he dedicated his own Lateran Palace a Church to the Savior, and adjoining it built a basilica named for St. John the Baptist, upon the place where he had been cleansed from the leprosy of unbelief when he was baptized by St. Sylvester. Pope St. Sylvester himself consecrated the basilica on the 9th day of November. We celebrate the anniversary of this consecration today, since this was the first time that a church in Rome was publicly consecrated, and the image of the Savior, depicted on the wall, appeared to the Roman people.

Pope Sergius III (904-911) rebuilt the Basilica after an earthquake and he dedicated it to Christ the Savior again, with the intercession of St. John the Baptist. Pope Lucius II (1144-1145) added the intercession of St. John the Evangelist to the Basilica. There is no one named St. John Lateran, it is after these saints with the name St. John.

Today as we celebrate this Feast, please say a prayer for Pope Francis. It is also a great time to reflect on the gift of the Church in our own lives. It is through her, entrusted by our Lord Himself, that we received the great gift of Baptism. As the Responsorial Psalm for today says, *The waters of the river gladden the City of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!*

May God Bless you and Mary keep you,
Fr. Christopher Coman