

Our Faith on Sunday

GOSPEL REFLECTION



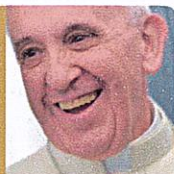
In this Sunday's gospel reading Jesus refers to his body as a "temple". We can extend the meaning of this reality of his "body" to the Church which is his Mystical Body. In many ancient religions the temple was the place where ritual sacrifice was carried

out, even, at times, human sacrifice. By his death on the cross as an innocent victim Jesus put an end to all practices of ritual sacrifice as a way of pleasing God. The "temple" becomes the "church", the gathering place of those who worship God not by spilling blood but "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4,24). The physical church is built with stone but it only serves its purpose if it is the place where Jesus is present among those who are united in his name (Mt. 18,20). St. Paul writes to the followers of Christ saying, "Brethren, you are God's building" and

"You are the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 3:9; 6:19). The Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship reminds us: "A church is the place where the Christian community is gathered to hear the word of God, to offer intercession and praise to Him, and above all to celebrate the holy mysteries, and it is the place where the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is kept. Thus, it stands as a special kind of image of the Church itself, which is God's temple built from living stones." (Decree, 29 May 1977).



POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL FRATELLI TUTTI BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL



Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE



THE INJUSTICE OF WAR

238. War can easily be chosen by invoking all sorts of allegedly humanitarian, defensive or precautionary excuses, and even resorting to the manipulation of information. In recent decades, every single war has been ostensibly "justified". The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the possibility of legitimate defence by means of military force, which involves demonstrating that certain "rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy"²³⁹ have been met. Yet it is easy to fall into an overly broad interpretation of this potential right. In this way, some would also wrongly justify even "preventive" attacks or acts of war that can hardly avoid entailing "evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated".²⁴⁰ At issue is whether the development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the enormous and growing possibilities offered by new technologies, have granted war an uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians. The truth is that "never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely".²⁴¹ We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a "just war". Never again war!²⁴²

239. No. 2309. 240. Ibid. 241. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 104; AAS 107 (2015), 888. 242. Saint Augustine, who forged a concept of "just war" that we no longer uphold in our own day, also said that "it is a higher glory still to stay war itself with a word, than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war" (*Epistola* 229, 2: PL 33, 1020).

We may think that we give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. It is true that the primacy belongs to our relationship with God, but we cannot forget that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others. Prayer is most precious, for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God's gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.

Similarly, the best way to discern if our prayer is authentic is to judge to what extent our life is being transformed in the light of mercy. For "mercy is not only an action of the Father; it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are". Mercy "is the very foundation of the Church's life". In this regard, I would like to reiterate that mercy does not exclude justice and truth; indeed, "we have to say that mercy is the fullness of justice and the most radiant manifestation of God's truth". It is "the key to heaven".



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Rev 21:2

**I saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.**

Or:

Cf. Rev 21:3

**Behold God's dwelling with the human race.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people,
and God himself with them will be their God.**

COLLECT

O God, who from living and chosen stones
prepare an eternal dwelling for your majesty,
increase in your Church the spirit of grace you have bestowed,
so that by new growth your faithful people
may build up the heavenly Jerusalem.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Or:

O God, who were pleased to call your Church the Bride,
grant that the people that serves your name
may revere you, love you and follow you,
and may be led by you
to attain your promises in heaven.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

In those days: The angel brought me back to the door of
the Temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the
threshold of the Temple towards the east (for the Temple faced
east). The water was flowing down from below the south end
of the threshold of the Temple, south of the altar. Then he
brought me out by way of the north gate and led me round on
the outside to the outer gate that faces towards the east; and
behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. And he
said to me, 'This water flows towards the eastern region and
goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water
flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever
the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and
there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the
waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live
where the river goes. And on the banks, on both sides of the
river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will
not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every
month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.
Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 46(45):2-3. 5-6. 8-9. R.5

**R. The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place, the abode of the Most High.**

God is for us a refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in time of distress:
so we shall not fear though the earth should rock,
though the mountains quake to the heart of the sea.

The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place, the abode of the Most High.
God is in her midst, she cannot be shaken;
God will help her at the dawning of the day.

The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come and behold the works of the LORD,
the awesome deeds he has done on the earth.

SECOND READING

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.
1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17

Brothers and sisters: You are God's building. According to the
grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid
a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each
one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a
foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit
dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy
him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Alleluia, alleluia. 2 Chronicles 7:16
**I have chosen and consecrated this house, says the Lord,
that my name may be there for ever.**
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 2:13-22

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up
to Jerusalem. In the Temple he found those who were selling
oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting
there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of
the Temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the
coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.
And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things
away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.' His
disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house
will consume me.'

So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing
these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple,
and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has
taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it
up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of
his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his
disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed
the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, the offering made here
and grant that by it those who seek your favour
may receive in this place
the power of the Sacraments
and the answer to their prayers.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. 1 Pet 2:5

**Be built up like living stones,
into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.**

R.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who chose to foreshadow for us
the heavenly Jerusalem
through the sign of your Church on earth,
R. grant, we pray,
that, by our partaking of this Sacrament,
we may be made the temple of your grace
and may enter the dwelling place of your glory.
R. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**