

Liturgy Lessons: 2018

episode #4: "The Church Building"



The Catholic Church is a sacramental Church which means deeper realities are expressed in perceptible signs. The church building is not a neutral place; it is not simply a skin for liturgical action. It is a *place* where prayer happens; it is a temple where sacrifice is offered.

The building is a sacramental sign: there is found the Body of Christ. The door signifies the crossing of a threshold, an entry into the Garden of Eden. It is our return to Paradise.

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (from the Vatican II Council) teaches, "Often the Church has also been called the building of God. The Lord Himself compared Himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the cornerstone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles, and from it the Church receives durability and consolidation. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God ... , the dwelling place of God n; and, especially, the holy temple." (Para # 6)

The shape of the building, the door, the threshold, the aisle, the pews, the sanctuary, the altar, the chair—these all mean something. The place for worship is not neutral; it is charged with meaning.

IN THE TRADITION

+ "In Sacred Scripture we find many images which bring out various complementary aspects of the mystery of the Church. The Old Testament favors those images bound to *the people of God*. The New Testament offers images that are linked to *Christ as the Head*. Other images are drawn from pastoral life (sheepfold, flock, sheep), from agriculture (field, olive grove, vineyard), from construction (dwelling place, stone, temple), and from family life (spouse, mother, family)." From *the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, n. 148

FOR YOUR REFLECTION

What architectural features of our church help symbolize the "Gateway to Heaven," the "Body of Christ," the "New Jerusalem?"

Today's Liturgy Lesson is one part of a thirty three part package intended to help us understand and embrace our experience of the Sunday Mass. Past lessons will be available upon request.

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