

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Nov 9th 2015

Sometime ago in my hometown, I noticed a broken pipeline that had water spurting from it and forming a little stream as it flowed. The water pipe had been cracked for some time as the little stream flowing through the barren land had brought fresh green grass and wildflowers to sprout. The trickle of water brought life and beauty to parched earth.

The Jews experience a kind of parched earth when exiled in Babylon (593-571 BCE). The prophet Ezekiel, however, has this vision of the new Temple: a spring wells up, flows East, transforms the desolate Arabah region (like a new garden of Eden), and enters the Dead Sea, purifying it. The spring's water brings life and healing. The psalmist (Ps 46) exults as the stream gladdens the city of God.

Around 600 years later, Jesus makes a whip out of cords and drives out those making his Father's house into a marketplace. The moneychangers and sellers, who became rich at the cost of the poor, are driven out. In answer to the Jews' request for a sign, Jesus says: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." They did not understand him. The Jewish temple was destroyed in 73 CE and has never been rebuilt. His disciples, however, remember his words when he rose from the dead on the third day.

Writing to the Gentile converts in Corinth, Paul preached the good news of Jesus and baptized them in Christ so that each could become God's "building," with God's Spirit dwelling in them. As we reflect on the readings on today's feast of the Lateran Basilica (Pope's Cathedral), let us remember that Christ dwells in each one of us; he gives us the courage to overcome our weaknesses and become holy temples of the Lord. We may be like the broken pipeline, but with God's grace flowing like a stream through us, we are called to foster life and beauty.

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