

XV GENERAL CHAPTER OFS 2017
9th November DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA
Homily scheme

0.

In 312, Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and donated to Pope Milziade the Lateran Palace. Toward 320, he added the Lateran Church, the first Western Church by date and dignity. Consecrated by Pope Silvestro on November 9th, 324 under the name of Basilica of the Holy Savior, it was the very first Church that received public consecration.

During the twelfth century, due to its baptistery, which is the oldest in Rome, it was dedicated to St. John the Baptist; hence its current name.

For more than ten centuries the Popes had their residence close by, and two hundred and fifty councils, including five ecumenical, took place there in its walls.

St. Francis came....

1.

For us Christians, it is accepted and taken for granted, as we acknowledge the Temple of Jerusalem, which is no longer, and speak of "purification" as "devotional" word. In order to understand the gesture, as always, we must imagine that Jesus accomplishes now what he did then. What would we say if we saw Him today with the whip, in religious or secular Temples?

Should we look at Him as a furious madman, taken by uncontrollable force, or at least a misfit, out of reality? Would not His behaviour affect many of our peaceful practices at the Temple, that is, God himself and our way of relating to Him?

2.

By calling Him "Father", Jesus brings God out of the Temple; His relationship with Him is not "religious" but familiar, belonging to the domestic sphere. The term reduces God's holiness. The relationship with Him is no longer of fear, but love, intimacy and trust. In His Father's house there is no place for managing business; feeling home, in the family, everything belongs to everyone.

3.

The Temple was a static reality; to go there men had to come out of their history and personal life. The tent in the desert, instead, the seat of God's glory, led the people and accompanied them; close to the people, God made history. In the tent, God comes down to earth; in the Temple, man ascends to God.