



The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After 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.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are here with me, and I hope in your boundless mercy and love. Thank you for watching over me and keeping me in your friendship. Thank you for the precious gift of our Mother, the Church.

Petition: Lord, increase my zeal!

1. The Indestructible Temple: Today we celebrate the dedication of St. John Lateran Basilica, known as the "mother and head of all the churches." Going to Rome and visiting this wonderful church, now some seventeen centuries old, one gets a sense of the durability of Catholicism. The Catholic Church has been around for a long time, and it will be around for a lot longer — until judgment day, to be exact. No matter how hard the world has tried, it hasn't been able to destroy the temple of the Church. This should give us a deep confidence that the Lord is with us as we journey through history.

2. Purification: Being indestructible doesn't mean, however, that the Catholic Church does not need constant purification. When our Lord arrived to the temple in Jerusalem, he found many things that marred the spirit of prayer and devotion that was to characterize that sacred building. His vigorous reaction serves to underline the high vocation of holiness that God had given to the Chosen People. We Catholics have

inherited that call; yet all too often, the ways of the world creep into our souls. Each one of us needs to submit to the Lord's purification. He will challenge us in our conscience, and sometimes that will sting like the whip of cords. But if we are sincere in our desires, we accept this with humility, aware that our souls must be living temples of God's presence.

3. Consuming Zeal: When the apostles contemplated our Lord's action in the temple, "zeal" was the word that summed it all up. Jesus is zealous because he doesn't accept the status quo of entrenched mediocrity. The day he arrives it is no longer business as usual: His Father's house WILL be respected. Too often we let the barnacles of laziness and the accretions of apathy weigh down and extinguish our zeal. Every day we must pray that the Lord will once again "enkindle in our hearts the fire of his love." Our zeal in living the faith is part of the way God works to make this temple of his Church indestructible. Don't we want to cooperate with his love, so that the "gates of hell will not prevail?"

Conversation with Christ: Lord, I love your Church. I thank you for the priceless gift of my Catholic faith. Protect the Church from all her enemies and help me to be an effective apostle filled with authentic zeal.

Resolution: I will offer myself to collaborate in a parish ministry or other Catholic apostolate out of love for the Church.