

## First Sunday in October\*

### MEDITATION FOR THE DEDICATION OF CHURCHES

#### 188.1 First Point

Reflect that the custom of consecrating churches to God is very holy and very ancient; innumerable holy places were built and consecrated by the apostles and by their successors. God, who is indeed everywhere by his immensity, is nevertheless present in a very special way in those places where he has willed buildings to be in his honor, like so many tabernacles where he has chosen to dwell with people,<sup>1027</sup> and be adored and to receive their prayers. It is in these sacred places that God wishes the holiest of actions to be performed and the most august services of religion to be offered.

For this reason we are commanded to attend these ceremonies with respect; destruction threatens those who profane these churches by their irreverence and misbehavior.<sup>1028</sup> Reflect, further, that we solemnize the dedication day of churches in order to make reparation to God for all the acts of impiety and the other faults which have been committed there during the year, and also to thank the Lord for all the favors we have received there, as well as to renew the devotion and veneration we owe to the church, which is called the house of God.<sup>1029</sup>

Consider how you have acted there, with what spirit you enter the church, and with what dispositions you offer there your prayers to God. Is it with a lively faith in the presence of God and with a genuine sentiment of the respect you owe to this infinite majesty?

#### 188.2 Second Point

Reflect that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament reserved in churches. This is why we are still more especially bound to recognize the presence of God in these holy places. God chose them in order to be honored there with a special worship, pleased to give graces more abundantly to those who ask for them with sincere devotion.

If under the Old Law people had to tremble with fear and respect when they entered the Tabernacle,<sup>1030</sup> which contained the Ark of the Covenant<sup>1031</sup> and the Tables of the Law,<sup>1032</sup> with what reverence and thought of our nothingness must we not enter the place where God is, as it were, seated on a throne of love to have mercy on us, and where God is constantly adored by innumerable angels who consider it a great honor to stand in his presence and to pay their homage?

### 188.3 Third Point

Consider that what should encourage us to have deep sentiments of respect and devotion in these holy places is the thought that this is where God is pleased to give us grace with very special generosity, goodness, and mercy. It is there that this Father of mercies with open arms welcomes the prodigal,<sup>1033</sup> where the Good Shepherd brings back to the fold the strayed sheep,<sup>1034</sup> where the afflicted find comfort, and where the sick are healed, the weak are strengthened, and the tempted are given new power over their enemies. Finally, this is where God listens favorably to the prayers we offer and is pleased to fill with graces those who have recourse to his goodness.

Let us acknowledge all these truths, and let us resolve again to act with such respect in churches that we may be worthy to receive the divine mercy there and to experience in ourselves all its effects in us.

Let us renew the consecration of the temple of our body and our soul<sup>1035</sup> by consecrating to God our heart and all our will after devoutly receiving Holy Communion.

\* The six meditations (103,184,168,181,83 and 188) appear, with the short biographies of Saint Yon and Saint Cassian, at the end of CL 12 (and the original Edition of the Meditations). It seems quite clear from the vocabulary and style that they were not written by De La Salle (See CL 47, pp. 539-540). The numbers of the Meditations are those of the 1882 Edition.

1027 Rev 21:3  
1028 1 Cor 3:17  
1029 Gn 28:17  
1030 Lv 16:2  
1031 Ex 40:2-3  
1032 2 Chr 5:10  
1033 Lk 15:20  
1034 Lk 15:4-6  
1035 1 Cor 6:19