

Today, we celebrate forty years since the first Mass here at the Monastery of Christ Our Saviour and a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, both in and from the monastery itself, and in the world outside. It is also the feast of the dedication of the Lateran Basilica – the mother church of all our churches, symbolic of the move from Jerusalem to Rome and also of the Church, that is, Christ's body, as the new Temple to replace the old. And so we have a wonderful series of readings today, highlighting the nature of this change. Ezekiel speaks of the life-giving waters which flow from the Temple to enrich even the Dead Sea; Paul warns of the need to build on the foundation of Christ, with materials that will withstand the fire of judgement; in John's gospel Jesus sets the precedent for this change, this interior conversion, by ridding the Temple of the rotten material at its heart – symbolised by the market of sacrificial goods in the outer court, and so, also, symbolising the material in his own person that will survive the fire of the Temple authorities' retribution. This is the sort of material we are called to be in this monastery: it's not the fabric of the monastery itself which is our witness, the stones and tiles which first catch the eye, but the sense of peace instilled by our own inner sense of peace, built on prayer and a close following of Christ. This isn't easy. No Christian life worth its name is easy. It requires a firm foundation, a real desire to follow Christ, come what may, and a constant attention to the building up of love, to the kindness which keeps us together and makes this such a hospitable place in which to live. Every word counts, and every action.

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