

Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral

I've supported the Kansas City Symphony, Ballet and Opera companies for decades, so I followed them all from their time at the Lyric Theater over here on Tenth Street to their new home at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Two halls inside that building are named for two families whose extraordinary gifts made the move possible. The symphony performs in a room called Helzberg Hall. At the debut, conductor Michael Stern invited Shirley Helzberg to the stage to receive the appreciation of audience. I'll never forget what she told us; her words nearly brought me to tears. She said, "This is your hall. You should consider it as having your name. When you bring guests over here, if your name is Smith, you tell them, 'Welcome to Smith Hall,' and if your name is Jones, you tell them, 'Welcome to Jones Hall.'"

That's how Bishop Johnston feels about this cathedral, and I share his message. Whenever anyone from this diocese comes to this building, you come not to the bishop's cathedral, but to your cathedral. This is yours. You may belong to another parish, and that's great. But everyone who belongs to a parish in our diocese also has a cathedral, and this is it. This is your cathedral.

Jesus clearly felt that way about the Temple in Jerusalem. When he walked in there, he felt at home. He prayed there; he taught there. So when he saw moneychangers, sheep, oxen and doves violating the space, he took action. John doesn't tell us where he got the cords to make his whip. Did he pull off the ones around his waist? Did he buy some from a merchant so happy to make a sale he didn't notice he was selling a weapon about to be turned against him? No matter, Jesus took it from there. This was his house. This was his Father's house. He immediately restored order. Zeal for his Father's house consumed him.

When the Jewish leaders asked for some explanation, Jesus made a prophetic reference to his own body: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Not only did he consider the Temple the home for his body, he considered his own body a temple.

Many of us have strong feelings toward the places where we worship. We identify with them. They are our sanctuaries. They house memories of our most powerful spiritual experiences. Some of you were baptized here. Some were married here. Some of you met your closest friends here. You feel as intensely about this building as you do about your own body.

We are blessed to have a cathedral of great beauty, antiquity, and presence. As Jesus considered his own body a temple, so we should consider our own bodies as cathedrals of great beauty where others may come to experience the presence of God. As we celebrate this anniversary, let us give thanks for those who made this building. They would be proud of it today. And let us each strive to live in a way that would make this building proud of us.