

You Are God's Temple (7th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

1 Corinthians 3:16-23—The Temple of God

¹⁶ Do you not know that *you are God's temple* and that *God's Spirit dwells in you*? ¹⁷ *If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.* ¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," ²⁰ and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." ²¹ So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; ²³ and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:16-23)

1. Temple: God's "temple" (Greek *naos*) (3:16)
2. Spirit: place where God's "spirit" (Greek *pneuma*; Latin, *spiritus*) dwells (3:17)
3. Holy: = "holy" or "set apart" (Greek *hagios*; Latin *sanctus*) (3:17)

[W]hen the priests came out of the holy place, *a cloud filled the house of the Lord*, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for *the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord*. Then Solomon said, "The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have built thee an exalted house, *a place for thee to dwell in forever*" (1 Kings 8:10-13)

Living Tradition

John Chrysostom: "Do you not know that you are the Temple of God?" *For since he had discoursed in the section before, concerning those who were dividing the Church, he thenceforward attacks him also who had been guilty of uncleanness; not indeed as yet in plain terms but in a general way; hinting at his corrupt mode of life and enhancing the sin, by the Gift which had been already given to him. Then also he puts all the rest to shame, arguing from these very blessings which they had already: for this is what he is ever doing, either from the future or from the past, whether grievous or encouraging. First, from things future; "For the day shall declare it, because it is revealed by fire."* Again, from things already come to pass; "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 9.7; in *NPNF1* 12.52)

Thomas Aquinas: "[I]f any man violates the temple of God, him shall God destroy..." [1 Cor 3:17] Now the "temple of God" is violated in two ways: in one way, by false teaching, which does not build on the foundation, but rather uproots it and destroys the edifice... *In another way a person violates the temple of God by mortal sin, through which he destroys himself or someone else by his works or example...* For a person who

profanes a sacred thing commits a sacrilege... (Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* no. 175).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (7th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. What are the implications of Paul's teaching that Christians are not just "believers" but "temples" of God? How then should we live?

For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P.; eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón; Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).
2. Gerald Bray, ed. *1-2 Corinthians* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VI; Downers Grove, IL.: IVP, 1999).
3. George T. Montague, SM, *First Corinthians* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).