

Feast of Ss. Simon & Jude I & II

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

Brothers and sisters:

You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.

Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

PSALM 19:2-3, 4-5

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day pours out the word to day, and night to night imparts knowledge.

Not a word nor a discourse whose voice is not heard; Through all the earth their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world, their message.

LUKE 6:12-16

Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.

When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.



Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1Cor 3:16)

Our metaphor of a building speaks dynamically of our relationship with God and our relationship with each other.

As a home houses my life, may my heart house God. As the Spirit lives in me, I am joined to others in the Spirit as a people, as a worshiping community, to be the dwelling place for God, a manifestation of his grace to all.

I love this building talk. I've always been fascinated with buildings.

During the Depression, my dad as a youth, helped my Grandfather to build their house. They built it with the remains of a rundown house as they could not afford lumber. Dad told me how he would pull nails from the boards and straighten them out for re-use—by the thousands!

My Father-in-law was an architect and contractor. He built housing developments and office buildings. We still point out his buildings to our kids whenever we drive by, even some 60 years later. My wife tells me of the times when, as a girl, she would sit by his elbow as he worked late at home on plans. She told me he even named a street after her. I don't know if it's Jan Marie Lane or Boulevard. If I could go back in time, I would make a husbandly suggestion: Jan's Way.

When I visit New York City, I am like any other typical tourist with my neck permanently craned upward.

Scripture gives us metaphors and allegories to help us creatures of the dust to appreciate the divinity for which we were created.

Often times, I rush through the metaphor to get at what I think is the "real thing", the spiritual thing. I do so in haste and am the less for it. I'd be better served if I just dwelt more in appreciation of the physical so as to better apprehend the spiritual. After all, our Christian heritage teaches us that there is no real separation of the physical world and the spiritual. It is one creation.

In Christ's sacrifice, all creation is made anew. Christianity teaches that at Jesus' Second Coming, we will experience His Resurrection, our souls being reunited with our bodies in the Kingdom come.

So, to delve more into the metaphor of buildings, I'm going back to age 5. I loved my Lincoln Logs and especially my vintage American Plastic Bricks building set. I learned then how important each brick (person) was. As with my rough use with toys, some were chipped and cracked (like us). The walls were weak if the bricks were just stacked, but strong when interlaced (like us). The walls would topple if I started laying bricks on top of my bedroom

carpet, they needed the foundation strips (the Apostles and the prophets). And, of course, the roof can't be just plopped on the walls, all the door and window openings need to be capped first. *The capstone (Jesus Christ) is found at the apex of an arch, the final piece placed in construction and locks all the stones into position allowing the arch to bear weight.*ⁱ

At the age of 5, I came to appreciate sound building practices, based on my experience of building collapses-- by the hundreds. This was very important to my survival as a pre-teen when, unbeknownst to my mom, me and my buddies were building underground forts in the side of the cliff just a ¼ mile up from my home. Now collapses there could produce more dire results.

[May we all take a few seconds right now in silence to acknowledge the role of our Guardian Angel to protect us from the Devil... and from ourselves.]

All I had to explain to Mom were the crab apple bruises... because forts do get assaulted, donchaknow.

Maybe now, may we consider the divinity to which our metaphor points? Let us read the Letter again:

Brothers and sisters:

*You are no longer strangers and sojourners,
but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of
God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as
the capstone.*

*Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the
Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

We are all family. We belong to one large household. We do so, we are so, because we all have the same Father. In Christ Jesus, we are real family with the ones who came and left before us and with those who follow after we leave this plane. And yet given the distances of miles and time, we are one people, one dwelling, a sacred temple for the Spirit.

Our Creator gives us everything we need. However, the litany is long in recitation of how we do not treat each other as sacred: wars, violence, oppression, poverty, starvation and loneliness.

As fellow citizens with the holy ones, may we respond with Jesus as the one who holds all together to bring peace, healing and love to all in need (and all are in need).

Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1Cor 3:16)

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ⁱ *Keystone (architecture)*, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_\(architecture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_(architecture))