

**Memorial of the Dedication of the Basilicas  
of Saint Peter and of Saint Paul  
November 18**



**St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City**



**St. Paul's Basilica, Outside Rome**

**NO EDIFICE COMPLEX** – An often-missed aspect of our celebration each November of the Communion of Saints is our communion expressed physically by way of certain

buildings. On November 9<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the dedication of the Lateran Basilica (“The Mother and Head of all Catholic Churches”) and this then on November 18<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the **Basilica of the St. Peter** (built over Peter’s tomb) and also of the Dedication of the **Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls** (built at the place of Paul’s martyrdom). So what? Well...

- 1) Many are scandalized by the specificity of Jesus the Christ. To say that that **GOD** existed fully in **this** one human person, born of **this** one woman, over **these** 34 particular years, in **this** particular location and cultural setting is something that should take our breath away (which is why we bow at the waist when we profess this during the Creed in Mass). To become scandalized by Christianity’s shocking specificity (“**this** man”), unicity (this **one** man and this **one** life) and universality (this one man is the **Savior of all creation**) could be a step up for some of us. Religion begins with wonder.
- 2) So why wouldn’t such scandalous specificity flow over into the followers of Christ, eg.: **this** man Peter was crucified for Christ **here**; **this** man Paul was beheaded for Christ **here**. We mark these spots because our faith rests to a large degree on God’s scandalously specific actions in the lives of **these** specific two men, buried or martyred in **these** specific two locations.
- 3) In celebrating the dedication of these buildings, we celebrate the **dedication of these men**. The same Holy Spirit who animated Peter and Paul,

animates us. Through the Holy Spirit we are in communion with Peter and Paul, and this communion is both expressed and deepened in our celebration in Phoenixville of the anniversary of the dedication in Rome of their tomb or execution site.

- 4) Saints Peter and Paul are the secondary patron saints (after Mary as the Immaculate Conception) of the Church of Philadelphia; that's why the principal church building of our Archdiocese is the Cathedral of **Saints Peter and Paul**. May our communion with Saints Peter and Paul (both as Roman Catholics and as Philadelphia Catholics) renew our zeal for Jesus and for His Body, his Visible Communion: the Church.
- 5) FYI, virtual tours of each of the four major Roman Basilicas<sup>1</sup> are available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Peters; 2) St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls; 3) Saint Mary Major; 4) Saint John Lateran