



Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



Building Our Houses on Solid Rock

September, 2011

My Dear People of God:

It is important for us to recognize that Gospel messages are directly applicable to our lives and that they are often applicable in more than purely spiritual ways. For instance, our Lord said that a house built on sand will fail in a flood and a house built on solid rock will stand despite adverse weather. This is good advice for contractors -- and it is equally good advice for us as persons, and for the Church.

In California I understand that something known as seismic retrofitting is sometimes recommended or even necessary. For us as people of God it is important to recognize that we too need to be prepared for difficulties and hardships. This means doing our own personal and ecclesial seismic work. This work is largely spiritual.

The foundation of our personal spiritual lives needs to include regular confession, weekly Mass at the minimum, regular contact with Sacred Scripture, spiritual reading, study, prayer and social outreach. These are things which our Parish churches can help facilitate but these cannot be done for us. God gives us the grace we need to embark upon these necessary elements of 'building our houses on solid rock'. This work is both spiritual and personal.

The foundation of our Parish life needs to include ample opportunity for confession, reasonable and accessible Mass schedules, programs of spiritual enrichment, opportunities for social outreach and education, especially the catechesis of our youth. These the Parish must offer as the bare minimum structure, or foundation, for the proper fostering of Catholic life in our communities. This work is largely spiritual in nature.

The Diocese too offers and fosters important foundational programs -- those which strengthen our spirituality, and help build the stabilizing ground on which we stand. Promotion of vocations to priesthood and religious life, youth retreats and activities, catechetical training and administrative assistance to pastors are just a few of the things which the Diocese does that have a direct impact on parish life. It is also my goal to bring other spiritual experiences to the Diocese.

For instance: There is now a plan to bring Leonardo Defilippis and his presentation of the live drama *Vianney* to six locations spread throughout the Diocese in October. The production has been hailed as a powerful and moving performance; please see your Parish Bulletin for further details about when this event might be offered near you. I hope that this and other personally and spiritually enriching programs can become a more regular part of our Diocesan experience. Such spiritual programs are essential for a firm foundation in our faith.

Asking every good grace and blessing of God upon you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Robert F. Vasquez
Bishop of Santa Rosa