



March 6, 2011

The Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time

All who listen to my instructions and follow them are like a wise person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against the house, it won't collapse, for it is built on solid rock.—Matthew 7:24-25

Dear Friends;

After hurricane Katrina, and the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile last year we know how precarious a house over one's head can be.

Jesus is aware of our basic needs and how important it is for us to have a roof over our head. We all want a place where we can feel safe and a place where we can love and be loved. That is home at it is best. We also know what a precious gift it is and we to hang onto such a gift.

This is the image that Jesus uses to speak of enacting his words. Today we hear the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount. For the last several weeks he has been teaching us to imitate God—"be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

How is the Father perfect—he blesses the poor and lowly, he is unconditional love—he makes it to rain on the just and the unjust. He calls us to be salt and light for the world—catalysts of the divine fire of love. He teaches us to forgive our persecutors, love our enemies and lend to those in need.

When we enact Jesus' radical vision of love we find that place of safety and security. God's Word, Jesus, desires to find a home in each of us. The only way that can happen is if we live his words out in our lives. Saying we believe is not sufficient. His word only finds life in us by enacting it.

We live in times that are stormy. Cultural and economic storms are raging. These storms pit us against one another: young workers vs. those about to retire, working/middle class union members against non-union workers, those on the extremes drowning out the voices in the middle.

The only way to survive these is to build a home where love can live. The first is we need to remember that we are called to a communion with Jesus that is personal but not private. We can only maintain the encounter with him in the fellowship of believers—the Church. Jesus teaches us that community, fellowship, solidarity, forgiveness and radical love is how we are going to survive. It is the rock on which we must build.

The only way we can have a place where God's word can live is to live it and teach it to others. We do this in our homes by prioritizing family time (dinner, and other together activities) over other demands. Parents must model for their children patience and forgiveness.

We also learn the way of Jesus when we prioritize Sunday Eucharist. When we realize that the celebration of Eucharist builds us into the house of God we build community, practice forgiveness and extend our arms to the needy. Then we will experience that place of safety where God and us dwell together.

Peace,

Fr Ron