

HOMILY SUN 6B XII-PC, 12 FEB 2012

This past week every household registered in XII Apostles Parish should have received a letter from me about our impending Embracing Our Faith . . . Building Our Future Campaign. It is an exciting experience as a pastor to witness the birth of a new parish as is happening here at XII Apostles. One could more accurately call it a rebirth in our case, since there once was a XII Apostles Church here in PC over 70 years ago. Founded around 1870, that simple structure was razed to the ground in the 1930s; I suspect it was a casualty of the Great Depression. Who would have thought that decades later a new Catholic community would rise from the ruins and within the space of 4 short years grow to become one of the largest Christian churches in Platte City? Our parish is an apt symbol of the resurrection, a testimony to the enduring power of Christ's victory over sin and death. It is this faith in a God who brings life from death that animated the XII Apostles who proclaimed Christ's gospel to the world. And this apostolic faith is what we 21st century followers have embraced and what brings us together as a Catholic family. As we stand at the dawn of a new era for Catholicism in northern Platte County, we, like our forebears in faith, are summoned to build the Church's future in this corner of the globe.

I've had the joy of seeing this building process at work during my past few years here. Among the first endeavors was the establishment of a Parish School of Religion right here in PC for the children of our community: within my brief tenure, its enrollment has doubled to around 100 students. During this time, we've added a Youth Minister so that our parish can better catechize the young people of our community. Almost every week our youth have the opportunity to learn about the Catholic faith, serve the needy, or just have wholesome fun w/ other Catholic peers. The past few years have also seen the emergence of the Adult Faith Formation program. Thanks to the work of our AFF Team and other volunteers, adult parishioners now have the chance to develop the faith of their childhood into an adult faith through guided studies of the Bible, the Mass, and other essential elements of our religion. We've also made a number of upgrades to our physical facilities, enlarging our worship space and acquiring accommodations for Sunday school. Our parish has gotten into the 3rd millenium w/ a website, email, and all the conveniences of modern technology. And of course, we launched a successful capital campaign to finance the construction of a permanent church at our new campus on 136th Street. Construction on the facility should begin this spring.

As mentioned, thanks to the generous donations made to our capital campaign, we've been able to design a new church that will meet the needs of our parish for decades to come; construction will begin in just a few months. But there's a lot more to the life of a Catholic parish than buildings. The other elements of the parish apostolate involve financial costs too. Wages for parochial personnel, leases for our chapel and religious education spaces, supplies for liturgy, administration, and other expenses add up quickly. As our parish continues to grow, and I'm confident it will grow even more rapidly once the church is built, expenses will grow apace.

And that's why we're implementing the Embracing Our Faith . . . Building Our Future Campaign. Our hope is that you good folks will get into the same spirit that filled the hearts of the anonymous leper and the heroic apostle Paul, impelling them to share the gospel with whomever they met. My prayer is that we the faithful souls of our parish will share even more generously of our financial resources so that we can build a future for the Catholic faith here at XII Apostles. I deeply appreciate your prayerful consideration!