

22nd Sunday A 8-31-08

The parish has had a tough week and perhaps some of you have too, but consider Peter. Last Sunday, Peter was the "rock" on which Jesus would build his Church. Today, he is an "obstacle," a stone that would trip Jesus. Today Peter is a "Satan" who is tempting Jesus away from his mission, which is to die for us on the cross. For all of us who mess up, all of us who are selfish or angry or lazy or bitter or impure or gossipy--for every person here who messes up and fails, think about Peter: *he actually tries to stop Jesus from saving us!* And even that is forgiven. "Every saint had a past; every sinner has a future." Peter, you goofed up so often, but you loved the Lord. You really did.

I mentioned that the parish had a tough week. The Marge Schott Foundation did not give us the quarter-million dollars for our new church; they offered just \$50,000.00--and that over two years. So we will have to worship in this inadequate church and in the Ventura Building for a little while longer. We humans think of success, of achievement--just as Peter did. God thinks of faithfulness, even in suffering--which is what Jesus did.

We want a beautiful new building and a growing, flourishing parish. We may even have plans to lure people back from other parishes down the road. **God** wants us to humbly carry the cross a while longer. Perhaps we will be a much better parish for it. More prayerful, perhaps. Or more grateful.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans “do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God...”

“This age” is about being Number One, about achieving, about being strong and right. God’s will is about being faithful, even when life is hard. And isn’t it rather inspiring that we have a vice-presidential candidate who has a little child with Down’s Syndrome?

So this parish is not going to rage against the Schott Foundation. We’re not going to go round feeling sorry for ourselves. We’re going to be faithful to Jesus Christ, and we’re going to do what St. Paul told the Romans to do, which is to be a “transformed” parish, that discerns what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. I recommit myself to St. Bernadette, and I urge you to do the same.