

Prophets do not fore-tell the future. They are not fortune tellers. But, they do Forth-Tell the future. In other words, they relate God's message given to them, essentially, "Look, if you continue down this road, I can tell you what is likely to happen... and you will not like it, shape up." Prophets read the signs of the times and gave the people God's view, encouraging them to change their course, to repentance and conversion, to vision, to seek the abundant life He wants us to have.

Within the Rite of Baptism we read and hear these words during the anointing with Sacred Chrism: "As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life." In our Baptism, we have been gifted with a portion of Jesus' identity as priest, prophet and king. We are a prophetic people. With discernment, faith, wisdom and understanding, we are called to listen to one another and to voice our concerns and our vision.

As a Church, as a parish, as individual Christians, we are called to be prophets to one another. Over the last two years I have come to believe that we *must be* prophets to one another. We need to encourage one another to hope, to believe in a vision of a bright future for this parish, to be a light for future generations. We are a divided parish, limited by inadequate facilities that do not meet the needs of our growing and increasingly vibrant parish. We need a new church, a new hall, a new school.

Today, our parish community number 3,383 FAMILIES— not 3,383 individuals. The fact that we have a few empty seats at weekend Masses is not a great criteria to make a decision on this issue. For those of us who are naysayers, we need to try to obtain a perspective of the needs of this community today and tomorrow. Olive and Columbia no longer meet our needs. Spend a week at each campus this Fall when the Academy and most Faith Formation classes are in session. You will see how we use every inch of meeting space at both sites and we cannot accommodate everyone. *We need more than 20 regularly available rooms for adult and youth ministry meetings, gatherings, and classes.*

Our old facilities are worn and increasingly costly to maintain – and, this is money we would rather use for ministry and evangelization. Our sites have serious electrical, structural and maintenance issues that limit their use and that's not going to improve.

That's today. Now let's talk about tomorrow. Redlands and the surrounding areas are growing in population. New developments in Highland, and especially in the Pass area, are burgeoning— and many parishioners already live in these areas. *By the time children born today graduate from high school, our parish family will include about 5,235 families.* Where will we put them? What kind of parish are we creating for them? We need to think about preparing a place for our future Catholics like those who came before us did. Now it is our turn to build on the foundation that we have received; and, in doing so, we honor them and we share the Gospel. With the way the world is going today, future generations will NEED us.

We are facing an increasing shortage in the number of priests available. We are blessed with three priests today, but that will not last - nor will it be the norm at *any* parish. ***Our reality is that, within 10 years, we will be at least 800 families larger but we will no longer be able to offer 9 weekend Masses.*** The priest shortage, aging structures that are costly to maintain, lack of space, and increasing population are the signs of our times. Our blessed growth continues to outpace our ability to service or house our needs. We must read these signs and work together in moving forward towards the vision God has for us and for those to come.

The power and the success of a prophetic message relies upon the openness of the listener. If we come together and see no other point of view but our own, we will see no other. As a parish, we can run the risk of acting like the naysayers of Nazareth. We can be disbelieving, negative, and fail to grasp a longtime vision for this parish. We can be skeptics who say that we previously failed twice and it will never happen. But, our prior efforts towards that vision have NOT failed! They gave us a good start.

The amendments to the original plan are now complete. It is important to note that, while we have changed building materials, the overall site plan has not changed. Amendments are based on current usage needs and projected growth in our area. Changes meet current and future usage needs; improve the site's efficiency; address security concerns; provide barrier-free accessibility for disabled persons; increase storage and parking capacities; include solar and sustainability solutions; include "hidden or soft costs" like city fees and permits, project management and construction; and allow room for expansion. This very detailed foundation will meet our needs for generations.

Our previous efforts have proven that, without substantial help from those with significant means, this much-needed campus will be most difficult to fund. We are now in the process of sharing our work with donors who have the capacity to make a significant gift. This will determine if the new design and prudent cost inspires those with *significant* discretionary wealth to donate because they are impressed with its scope, design, beauty, service, sustainability, and capacity to accommodate future growth; resolve the parking issues; provide barrier-free access; enable youth and adults to be educated with rooms for such; and create a secure, state-of-the-art Academy learning environment for the broader community.

Like Ezekiel, we must feel the movement of the Holy Spirit within us. Let us not respond like Nazoreans and see ONLY a carpenter's son; but rather, *let us fix our eyes on the Lord and take steps toward the vision He desires for us.* We are called to be good ground where the seeds of the Gospel can yield abundant fruit through the Spirit, for the benefit of this parish community and those to come.

Please pray that those with significant means respond generously to God's call and step up to make this vision a reality.

With God, nothing is impossible.
Deacon Steve Serembe