

Walking with Christ, building with Christ and proclaiming Christ

Homily by Most Reverend John T. Folda, Bishop of Fargo

April 24, 2014

*Trinity School/Holy Cross Groundbreaking
2820 Bluestem Drive
West Fargo, ND*

Thank you to all who are here for this great event in the life of the Church. Of course, this is Easter Week, and the Church continues to celebrate the Lord's resurrection, the new life which he now offers to us, his followers. As the Easter antiphon says, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad."

This is indeed the day the Lord has made. This historic day has been long anticipated, and we are joyful to see it finally arrive. Today we break ground for the first new school to be established in the Fargo Diocese in many decades. So this is unquestionably an important moment for Catholic education in our diocese, and in our whole community. But we are also beginning a new chapter in the life of Holy Cross parish. This groundbreaking also moves Holy Cross parish a giant step further in their plan to establish a new parish home. With the building of offices and a parish hall that will serve as their temporary church, this growing parish will have an even greater opportunity to flourish and welcome the many people who have swelled their ranks in recent years. What a great blessing it is to begin these projects together, and for Trinity School and Holy Cross parish to collaborate in this endeavor.

The day after his election as Pope, Pope Francis spoke to a group of assembled cardinals and bishops. He urged them in all things to walk with Christ, to build with Christ, and to proclaim Christ. And a short time later, I stated my intention to follow that same program as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Fargo. As I reflect on what we're doing here today, it seems to me that the Pope's exhortation is taking shape before us.

What is it we're doing here? First, we are walking with Christ. Before all else, we must be in the presence of Christ and walk along with him, in the direction that he sets for us. Much time has been spent in preparation for this moment, time for study, time for consultation, and most importantly, time for prayer. All through the planning that has brought us to this day, the bishop and priests and many faithful lay people involved have striven to walk with Christ, to travel on the path that he has laid out before us. Our prayer and discernment have helped us to stay grounded in the One whose work this is. And that walk with Christ must continue as we move forward. At every moment, we must be sure to walk with Him and to listen to Him, so that His voice will be heard by all who come to this holy place.

And, we must build with Christ. As the psalmist says, "If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor." What better way to build with Christ than to provide a place where our young people will learn our faith and grow in their knowledge and love of God, who is both Love and Truth incarnate. And how could we do better than to build a parish home for this family of God, which has grown so dramatically in recent years? But as St. Paul says,

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” What we build here, we build not on our own, but with and in our Lord Jesus Christ. If we build with him, then we build on a firm foundation, and this edifice will truly give glory to God.

And finally, we must proclaim Christ. The entire mission of Trinity School will hinge on this one essential act: the proclamation of Christ to every person who will walk through its doors, whether students, faculty, staff, family members, or visitors. In a very real way, Trinity School will be a herald of the Gospel, a living expression of the presence of Christ among us. And, of course, this is the mission of Holy Cross parish as well. The Church exists to make Christ known to the world, and Holy Cross Church will continue to carry out this mission as it has done for so many years. Pope Francis has called upon all of us to renew our commitment to evangelization, to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus, and with God’s grace our presence here today and into the future will allow that Good News to reach many hearts.

So, on this day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice. And let us resolve as we go forward to always walk with Christ, to build with Christ, and to proclaim Christ in all things. Whatever we do, let us do in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.