

[Spirituality](#)
[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

December 4, 2019

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



“A nation of firm purpose you keep in peace” (Isa 26:3).

Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27

There are times when Jesus’ parables can cast light on our current problems, and other times when current problems cry out for light from the parables.

The current crises in both our church and our national government can be seen as vivid examples of the parable of the houses built on rock and sand. Our institutions depend on strong foundations, especially in times of crisis. Jesus told his disciples that the foundation of their faith had to be God’s Word, and not just hearing it but also doing it.

It was not enough to say, “Lord, Lord,” to be a disciple. The missing verses of today’s Gospel (Matt 7:22-23), say that even those who said they prophesied, exorcized and worked miracles in Jesus’ name were among those who fell short of true discipleship. It is possible to be a church-going, service-oriented and theologically correct Catholic, and still not be a do-er of God’s word.

Systemic crises in the church will not be healed with talking points and public relations maneuvers. Meetings, speeches, and resolutions will not repair the breach of trust and lack of leadership in addressing real problems with action. Massive attrition, especially among the young, alienation of large numbers of women who have lost patience and hope over issues of equality and full recognition, will not be solved by paternal concern and promises. A house built on sand will not escape the storms of change, internal strife and betrayal.

Partisan political paralysis will not salvage a government shaken to its foundations, discarding its Constitutional framework, blurring solemn oaths and ignoring a critical balance of powers. A house divided against itself will not stand. Elected officials mired in corruption and focused only on personal survival cannot serve the electorate or the Republic they pledged to uphold and defend.

Jesus foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. He wanted his followers to depend on more than buildings, doctrines and rituals. Only Spirit and truth would save his church, a portable, internal formation of mind and heart to guide it down through the tortured paths of human history. He was God's Word within the baptized, bread for the road, light, salt and yeast to nurture growth and creativity to fill every culture and age with God's everlasting love.

We do the Word by being like Jesus, compassionate, just, welcoming, reconciling and self-sacrificing. There are no bystanders or observers, only workers and servants. We are living stones in the foundation of the Beloved Community. We are the hands and feet, the face, eyes and smile of the body of Christ in the world. When the winds rise and sea rushes in, we will stand firm.

Advertisement