



St. Thomas Aquinas, Cathedral

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My brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Cathedral of St. Thomas Aquinas has begun a seismic structural retrofit project for our Cathedral Church. During this year, we have all been made aware that we are in earthquake country. When the St. Thomas Aquinas Church was constructed 100 years ago, there were no codes or methods to build for earthquakes. During the construction, structural deficiencies in the building are being addressed. The foundation is piles of river rock cemented together. This rubble foundation would not do well in case of an earthquake. Two cement support walls have been built from the foundation to the top of the walls to stabilize the foundation and the walls. The Structural beams that hold up the floor were rotted. It was the grace of God that kept our heavy stone Altar from going through the floor. These beams have been repaired and secured. A new entrance way is being constructed to create handicapped accessibility to the Church and hall. New expanded and updated bathrooms have also been constructed. The electrical system has been upgraded and lighting has been improved. This project is essential if the cathedral is to continue to function and for people to be safe.

The Retrofit project is on time and in budget. The estimated cost of the project is 5 million dollars. The Cathedral community, between savings and pledges, has raised over 2 million dollars. We have 600 registered families and to date we have over 700 pledges. I have been humbled by the response of so many of our parishioners who are on restricted and limited incomes who have given even in these difficult economic times. I remember Jesus pointing out the poor widow who gave her last 2 coins and I am amazed by the generosity of our parishioners who have given from their need.

I, Fr. Thomas Czeck OFM Conv., rector of the Cathedral, come to you to ask for your help to complete the project of repairing your Cathedral. Bishop Calvo and I need your help and ask for your prayers and money to buy stones to repair the Cathedral. We ask; what can you give over the next 3 years to fund the retrofit of the Cathedral? All pledges are appreciated and we will pray for our donors.

St. Francis is the patron of this project. St. Francis heard God speak to him in a chapel that was in ruins. God called Francis saying: "Francis go and repair My house." Francis responded immediately and went to the community to beg for stones to repair the Chapel at San Damiano. Francis began to have others follow him and went to Pope Honorius III to approve his way of life for himself and his brothers, the Gospel life. The Pope had seen many such groups who came and went and did not give this poor beggar Francis much attention. That night, the Pope had a dream that the Church of St. John Latern, his home and the main church of Rome, was collapsing and in his dream a poor beggar was holding up the walls. When the Pope awoke, he knew that the poor beggar in his dream was Francis and approved the Franciscan way of life. Francis, by living the Gospel life was holding up the church. We are all called to rebuild the House of God with stones and money and hold up the Church with living faith and prayer. St. Francis Pray for us!

Fr. Thomas J. Czeck OFM Conv.