Remember a few weeks ago, we had Groundhog Day? The Punsutawney Phil and the Staten Island Chuck both saw their shadows and predicted there would be 6 more weeks of winter! Well, so far they’ve been pretty much right on, as evidenced of what we see outside. One would wonder when and if the ice and snow ever going to melt? Will spring even come at all? Well, officially spring doesn’t arrive until 3/20. So hold your breath!

 Spring is a season of new beginning and also planting. Not all the seeds that are planted will end up growing successfully. If the tree is not growing, it’s just taking up space and sucking up all the nutrients around. We can plant all the seeds we want but only God can provide the natural ingredients of sunlight, water and warm weather, in order to make it grow.

 In our New Testament lesson that we read earlier, the Apostle Paul compared the group of believers from the city of Corinth as “***infants in Christ***”. Many of them were new Christians, coming from different cultural backgrounds and upbringings. Some were raised as Jews and some were Gentiles. Like an infant, it takes a great deal of transition and adjustment not only for the parents, but for the infant herself to get acquainted with the new surroundings. An infant receives her nourishment from her mother. They establish a bonding relationship with one another during the early years of development. Most importantly they need lots of love, nurturing and patience in order to grow and develop. If I were to ask you, **“what is your earliest childhood memory?** What would you say?” How many of us remember the day when we took our first step or our first birthday party? Probably not! We may have photos of these important milestones, but chances are we have no idea of what happened unless our parents were telling us and passing the story down to us.

 One of my early childhood memories was when I first rode the bicycle on my own, without the training wheels that is. I think I was about 7 or 8 at the time. One of my uncles was pushing me and guiding me along as I was pedaling away. Suddenly I realized that my uncle was no longer pushing me and I was all on my own. He had abandoned me and allowed me to ride on my own. I kept pedaling because I knew I would fall if I had stopped. I remember that sense of freedom and overcoming my fear of falling off. Ever since, I’ve developed that confidence and the foundation of courage and faith of not falling down. I’m sure we all have our own personal fears as well.

 Likewise, when it comes to our spiritual walk, we also need to develop a foundation of faith that is rooted in Christ. It is a lifelong process that does not come overnight. There is no “magical” pill or instant injection that one can take when it comes to our faith nurture and development. It takes time to develop and nurture. The Holy Spirit guides us and leads us through our journey of faith, whether one is a teenaged youth or someone who’s in his or her 70’s, 80’s or even 90’s.

 Furthermore, the Apostle Paul compared the early church in Corinth as infants because they were still acting like “children”. They argued back-and-forth with one another because they couldn’t come to an agreement with various issues. They claimed their allegiance to their respective leaders, some say they follow Paul, some say Apollo, while failing to acknowledge Christ, who is the head of the church.

 Paul compared these new Christians using the “infants” metaphor, which can also be translated as “seeds” that we plant in the garden.

Regardless of who planted the seed or who watered, only God enables the growth to take place. *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to break down, and a time to build up.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

 It is God who provides the sunshine, the water and the warmth. But the early Christians didn’t get it. They were more focused on claiming their allegiance and struggle with power. They had little or no sense of unity in working together, striving towards a common goal and ironing out their differences. Paul reminded the Corinthians and all of us today that *we are God’s servants, we must work together. We are God’s field and God’s building.[[2]](#footnote-2) For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

**The foundation of Christian unity is grounded in our faith in Christ.** Often times churches split and division arise because members are not grounded in their personal faith and relationship with God. They would make critical decisions based on their individual preferences while trusting in their own judgments, rather than prayerfully seeking the common good through the Holy Spirit. Ministry thrives when all of its members working together as a team of individuals rather than individual teams. The early church, as well as many churches today, struggled with this very same issue.

 We must admit that our faith is a constant work-in-progress. No one can claim that he or she has got it all down packed. We are a “building” that requires constant maintenance. All the parts must work together and interdependently with one another in order to continue to shine for Christ before others.

 I remember when I was studying engineering in my undergrad years, we had to take a required course in foundation engineering. I remembered the most important part of any building is its foundation, whether it is on piles or on slab. I remember my professor told us that, “**the building is only as solid as its foundation.”**

Many of the Manhattan skyscrapers, including the soon-to-be-opened *Freedom Tower*, drill piles as far as 100 or 150 ft. down into the bedrock in order to ensure stability. Once the foundation is firmly established, the rest of the building was easy….just a matter of stacking columns and beams on top of each other.

 **In the same way, Christ established a new covenant and has laid the foundation of our faith through his death and resurrection.** All we need to do is just believe. No longer will we be like *children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”[[4]](#footnote-4)*

 In the Old Testament reading that we read earlier from the Book of *Deuteronomy*, Moses was reminding the Israelites of their decision to follow God, giving life and blessings to their children and to their children’s children. Moses was near the end of his life. He knew it’s time for him to pass on the torch to those who will succeed after him and lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

 Moses recalled the days when God laid out the Covenant with their forefathers like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Moses didn’t dwell on the past, his eyes were focused on the future…of those that will come after him and lead the people into the Promised Land. The foundation and the seed of faith had already been laid with the Word of God.

 Moses reminded the next generation of Israelites that they must never forget God’s covenant and that they must choose God and remain steadfast in their faithfulness. If you plan the seed of faith and God will provide the means to grow it.

 No longer will we drink milk like infants but we will chew on solid food instead. Gone are the “training wheels” to the bicycle but we will be able to ride on their own with greater degree of freedom and confidence. This is all part of the Holy Spirit at work in us, but it all comes down to our obedience to our sovereign God.

 **Obedience is a discernment process that involves not only our minds and wills but also our hearts.** We cannot say we are in obedience to God if we hold quarrels and grudges with one another. We cannot advance God’s ministry together if members are not on the same page and share a common vision together. That’s what the early church was struggling with the most. One theologian summed up our Christian unity as follows: “*God desires for the community to be blessed. God desires life, not death. God hopes that we will make the right choice, for faithfulness. The right choice means blessings for the entire community, not just for some.”[[5]](#footnote-5)*

 Through the planting of God’s Word in our heart, God enables this seed of HOPE to grow and blossom into a tree of life that will bear much fruits. These fruits edify one another and build each other up as the body of Christ, while yielding seeds for the future generations. The Holy Spirit, who is the source of our spiritual feeding, grows us and nurtures us each day and it sustains us for the generations to come.

 **We are God’s servants, God’s field and God’s building.** All of us are called to engage as a part of this ministry of reconciliation and love. Christ has laid Himself down as the cornerstone of our faith. We shall give God our utmost thanks, praises and highest honors.

 Our response hymn that follows will be one of the classic hymns #321 *“The Church’s One Foundation”*. May it not only be a reminder of our faith for all of us, but a proclamation to the rest of the world that Christ is the sovereign head of the church and the foundation of our faith. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Ecclesiates 3:1-3* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *I Corinthians 3:9* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *I Corinthians 3:11* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ephesians 4:14-15* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Andrew Foster Connors, *Feasting on the Word, Year A, Volume 1,* p.342 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)