

Most of us are familiar with the song: The Twelve days of Christmas: On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me a Partridge in a pear tree: on the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me two turtle doves. I will spare you from listening to the rest of the ten days. On the joyous feast of the Holy Family, the Gospel describes Joseph and Mary offered two turtle doves in the Temple as they consecrate their child Jesus to God.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke:

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.*

Now there was a woman in the Temple, a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. The Gospel of the Lord.

The tallest residential building in San Francisco is the Millennium Towers. It is a 58-story building with over 400 residential units. It opened in 2009. Seven years after opening, the residents were informed the main tower was both sinking and tilting. The luxury residential high-rise has sunk 17 inches and tilted 14 inches since it was completed. Some critics blame the city of San Francisco for allowing the building to be anchored 80 feet into packed sand rather than 200 feet down to bedrock. As Millennium Tower keeps on sinking, its fate remains unclear, although there is a proposal to fix the foundation which will cost the city over 100 million dollars.

This story reminded me of the words of Jesus, “Anyone who listens to my teaching and doesn’t put them into practice is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” But anyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like the wise person who builds his house on solid rock. When the rains and floods come and the wind beat against the house it did not collapse because it was firmly built.

One of the special people we meet in the Temple is a woman name Anna, who had built her life on solid rock. Anna was widowed at an early age. Throughout the bible God instructs His people to take care of the widows because the widows had a hard time taking care of themselves. Anna dedication to God, gave her the strength to endure many hardships because she had built her life on a firm foundation.

I was blessed to have known a woman named Mary who was a living image of Anna, the prophetess. Like Anna, Mary too was widowed at a young age and left to raise four children.

Mary was the mother of my two of my best friends Johnny and Joe. Both brothers died after very long, painful struggle. Johnny suffered with colon cancer and died his early thirties. I remember watching Mary day after day, sitting next to her son in the hospital, quietly and reverently praying the rosary. Her faith never wavered even after his death.

Mary's other son Joe died in his early fifties. Joe was paralyzed from his neck to his feet, after a car accident left him emotionally distraught for two years until the day he died. I was amazed to watch Mary sitting next to Joe from morning to night, calming him with her presence, her words and her prayers. When the storms of life came upon Mary, she did not collapse because like Anna, she had built her life on the firm foundation of solid rock.

If we find ourselves sinking and titling like the millennium towers, don't lose hope, it's never too late to rebuild our foundation. It will not cost of 100 million dollars to rebuild our foundation but it will cost of more time in prayer. The new year is a great opportunity to begin our rebuild, a day at a time, one prayer at a time. As Jesus said, "anyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like the wise person who builds his house on solid rock."

Who have you met that has inspired your faith? People you have witness who have gone through many storms but their faith never wavered. Spend some time this week reflecting on just how much these faiths filled people have touched your life. Write their names down on a sheet of paper and carry them throughout the week.

Let us pray: please pray after me: Lord Jesus, you call me to build my life on a firm foundation of faith, I need your help in order to endure the storms of my life, give me the grace to persevere in prayer, one day at a time, one prayer at a time. Amen and Amen.