

80th ANNIVERSARY OF SHRINE – “REFLECTIONS”

By Fr. Peter J. Krebs, S.T.

“Give me somewhere to stand and I will move the earth.”

These are the words of Archimedes, the great mathematician of ancient Greece and, for me, they summarize an important theme as I reflect on the 80th anniversary of our Shrine of St. Joseph.

In these words, I see the image of one who does not turn away from the distress of our world, but instead enters fully into it, because they have “somewhere to stand.” If we want to be grounded in our faith-life in dealing with our daily round, there must be holy ground under our feet – without it we will be blown about, hither and yon, by the storm.

For 80 years, the spirit and hospitality of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity has made the Shrine of St. Joseph holy ground under the feet of countless pilgrims. These grounds, forever sacred, voices of many cultures and languages have fostered a growing appreciation of the diverse paths by which God leads people to new life. The Shrine has always striven to be a stable ground of clarity and confidence in often a turbulent human landscape of shifting colors, crumbling hopes, frayed truths and uncertain commitments.

I see the Shrine as a place of life-giving rootedness in something larger than our own lives, something deep enough and enduring enough to keep us overboard and oriented in the storm. I have come to know the Shrine as a place where God speaks, a place of empowerment, of transformation, and a place of sending forth. A holy ground where God’s compassion and welcome is experienced and a new creation becomes visible. A place where faith can move mountains – “Give me somewhere to stand and I will move the earth.” The Shrine is such a place.

Finally, I believe the Shrine continues as holy ground as we each hollow these grounds, learning to be more fully grounded in the life of God. The ground under our feet, the Shrine of St. Joseph, the place from which faith flows forth in the action of God’s unconditional love, is God’s unequivocal YES to all creation, a YES to who we are on our journey, to what God is doing in us in the every day circumstances of our lives.

I pray on this occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Shrine of St. Joseph that we will all hear this same YES reverberating whenever we stand on the grounds of the Shrine – grounds forever sacred – and praise and thank our God for such a place – sacred ground under our feet!