



Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
THE CATHOLIC CENTER  
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Kent Walz  
Editor  
Albuquerque Journal  
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Dear Editor,

This is a reply to the negative op-ed piece by Bonnie Erbe on the Catholic Church printed December 2. Bonnie suggested the Church is falling apart! This isn't true. People have been prophesying the end of the Catholic Church for 2,000 years and we continue to grow larger daily!

The author points to the Brooklyn Diocese where churches have been consolidated and some have been closed. The reason for the changes in Brooklyn and other places in the northeast is that the demographics have changed. Ethnic parishes once so important are no longer necessary because the immigrants of past years have been assimilated into society and some of have moved to other parts of the area or to the west and south. Yes there has been a shortage of priests, particularly in some parts of the Church but there is an overall increase in men entering the seminary recently.

However, here in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, I would say the Church is flourishing. We have hundreds of adults entering the Church at Easter time; and after Easter I confirm about 3,500 teenagers in the Catholic faith each year. They have all had a program between 1-2 years of formation before they qualify which means that they are serious about their faith and want to be receiving the Sacraments of the Church. This year I ordained three men to the Priesthood and we have 30 others in formation right now preparing to become priests. We are presently building three new churches which is certainly not a sign that the Catholic Church is falling apart.

Yes, we have our challenges. Certainly some Catholics have drifted away and a large segment of society are non-believers. But we have an ambitious evangelization program called Awakening Faith that will be very visible in the community now and in the days to come inviting people back to the Catholic faith – reaching out to the inactive Catholics and unchurched persons.

The Church takes truth seriously and we stand for traditional Christian values. The article is critical of this fact. But the Churches that have given in to the secular material western culture are indeed doing badly. I believe that people want a Church that stands for something and doesn't change the teachings every time a new survey is conducted about what some people want. We believe that Jesus gave Peter, and his successors, the Popes, responsibility of guiding the Church and he promised that he would be with the Church forever.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan  
Archbishop of Santa Fe