

Dear Friends,

It has occurred to me that what our nation is experiencing in this financial crisis is the result of greedy practices going on for many years. We have enjoyed unparalleled prosperity. It seems that we have had the attitude that we can just keep on getting richer and richer, and that there is no limitation to how wealthy we can be.

I don't know a lot about money. I certainly don't know what the answer to our problems will be. I do know this: our financial crisis is huge, and no "quick fixes" are going to resolve it. We are going to experience some monumental difficulties. We may have to come to the realization that our world is changing in dramatic ways, and it will not be the same as we had always hoped it would be. And there is nothing we can do about it.

What do we want to have happen with this financial crisis? Do we want an easy fix that will give the appearance that the problem is solved? Is there a Band-Aid big enough to cure this malady? The best a "quick fix" will do, I'm afraid, is mask the problem behind a shiny veneer, while the root causes of the problem: greed, power, prestige and the belief that we are entitled to consume the world's resources at will, continue.

I hope I am wrong in saying this. Again, I am not a financial wizard. However, I see that we are going to have to walk a hard path in order for us to begin our recovery. I would like for us to see the days, weeks, months and years to come as a time of recovery rather than rescue. There is a big difference between the two. The rescue is not the solution; it is only the first stage toward recovery. When people are rescued from a hurricane they are brought to safety. They will survive, but they will still have to face the fact that their homes have been destroyed, and that they are going to have to rebuild their lives.

One thing we keep hearing from the politicians and pundits is that Main Street is suffering because of this financial crisis. We are hurting, but

we are also resilient and resourceful, and we know how to endure hardship. Is a rescue necessary? If it is, it won't be easy, and it will only be the beginning. Our recovery will have to include a vision of our culture that recognizes our strengths and weaknesses. We will have to live humbly. We will have to live within our means. We will have to accept the fact that our lives cannot be based upon what we want as much as upon what we need.

It is now time to see ourselves as stewards who are called to take good care of what God has given us, remembering that God is the owner of it all. We are given the benefit of using God's creation for our good and for the good of everyone else. But there are limitations to the good things we enjoy in this life. The rest is for others. But it all belongs to God.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel