

August 9, 2011

Dear Friends,

BuffaloNews.com reported that 1.6 million people moved out of New York State between 2000 and 2010. If you go back to 1960, then the number of those who have left the state is 7.3 million. Many of those New Yorkers have moved to North Carolina, as they continue to do today.

As a former New Yorker myself, I still pay attention to what is happening in the Empire State. Great times demand great leaders. New York City had faced some extraordinary challenges. They were blessed to find some great leaders who had the gift of inspiring others. Mayor Koch brought the city back from the brink of bankruptcy. Mayor Dinkins united a city torn by racial tension. Mayor Giuliani made New York City safe again.

All of us are worried about the economy. Our country's debt was downgraded for the first time in history on August 5th. We have to improve our economy. We should be creating jobs, which Mayor Bloomberg said "bring hope and opportunity, independence and security." He cautioned us not to stop believing in the future just because our economy is in trouble.

In his State of the City address earlier this year, Mayor Bloomberg said "We can stop investing in the future and watch the gains we made disappear or we can look forward and continue rebounding, continue growing, continue forging ahead. When you stop investing in the future, then the future hits the road; Jobs, people and capital, they all leave. The investments we are making create something you can't see or touch. Its energy and optimism – that the future happens here first.

Perhaps it's that energy and optimism that inspired all of us at St. Luke's to continue with the plans we made four years ago and proceed with the purchase of new land for our parish. Our worries about the economy tempted us to put off until tomorrow what we wanted to do today. It is because we believe in a bright future for our country that we "can look forward and continue rebounding, continue growing and continue forging ahead."

On August 4th, the Diocese of Charlotte closed on thirty-one acres of land just off I-485 on Fairview Road. This is land that we found and chose for our future church home. Praise God! He has answered our prayers and helped us find an heirloom piece of property large enough to answer all our needs for the next hundred years and close to our present location. This land gives us a place to go when the time comes. Eventually, the mall across the street will be built changing the complexion of the entire area. Lawyers Road will be widened to seven lanes and where we sit right now will become a convention center.

Until then we can plan what we will build on the new property: our church, our family life center, our faith formation classrooms, plenty of parking, perhaps even a school. Our grounds will be beautiful with gardens and a pond, a place all of us will be proud of.