



**First Anniversary and Blessing  
Christ Our Hope Parish, Seattle  
August 28, 2011**

**Most Reverend Alex J. Brunett  
Archbishop Emeritus of Seattle**

We gather today on the occasion of the First Anniversary of the Dedication of this Parish and this Church called Christ Our Hope. It has been a good year and much has happened to show signs of growth and blessings. When we opened this church we were committed to proclaim here in the midst of this city that we are a beacon of hope to all who seek the consolation of faith and compassion. We are here to be a sign to all that the embracing love of God reaches out into our community. We have come here to the heart of the city to proclaim that in God's house all are welcomed. And indeed we have made that the mission and strength of our presence here. We have welcomed the rich and poor, the traveler and the resident, the tourist and the pilgrim, the healthy and the wounded, the intelligent and those who are disadvantaged in any way, the homeless and the sheltered, the stranger and the friend.

We have been blessed by the wonderful and committed ministry of Father Paul Magnano, your Pastor, and three deacons, Sam, Larry and Terry, and the wonderful staff of dedicated volunteers and workers who are here to serve you and assure everyone who comes here that they are welcome in this house of prayer and hope.

We are here to live out the challenge of Christ to take up our cross each day and that means to make choices – to sort out our priorities in order to be present to this community, to “crucify” our own insecurities and preferences in order that all people may live in the grace of knowing that they are loved and supported and accepted. Christ invites us to take up the cross, not out of a sense of self-loathing or pessimism, but out of a sense of conviction and hope that the acceptance of the cross will lead to a life of love by which we live on Christ's promise of hope.

Today I want to challenge you to “Open wider the Doors” of this church to include more. We pass through a great many doors in our lives. The open door welcomes; it ushers in fresh air and light. “Yes, we are open, come on in, welcome!” The open door is the sure sign that we belong, that we have a place; that we are among those who love us.

In any new construction, architects spend a great deal of time and money, designing the entry. The size and colors of portals and thresholds convey to the visitor authority, majesty, mystery, stature. Passing through doors can intrigue us, excite us, inspire us, fill us with awe or dread. Locked doors are sure signs of defeat, rejection, desperation.

Doors can speak for us, as well. They can be slammed in anger. They can be opened in an act of compassion. In the corporate work, just having a door indicates your place in the organization. And in every community the real power rests with the one who has the key to the door.

The doors we pass through to enter the Church of Christ Our Hope are transitions from fear to sanctuary, from isolation to community, from struggle to peace.

These church doors welcome us into God's presence.  
The courthouse door is the entry way for establishing justice and protecting the common good.

The university door is the threshold of learning and discovery.

Our entry through these doors is the blessed assurance that we are home.

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls us to recognize that our presence here reminds us that God is the "Door through which we step from the reality of our imperfect, incomplete world to the reality of the perfect holiness of God. God invites us to pass through the threshold that is the Risen Christ; to leave behind our sadness and fears and doubts in order to come into the safety and warmth of God's hearth of peace and compassion. On our journey to the Kingdom of God, Christ Our Hope is the "door" of humble justice, selfless compassion and ready forgiveness that leads us to the dwelling place of God in our journey of life.

Jesus does not want us as students; he does not want us as admirers; he does not want us as fans. He wants us as followers, his disciples. Discipleship is not the avoidance of evil; to be Jesus' disciples is to do good, to seek out what is right, to work for justice, to engender peace. May we embrace the faith of the cross; faith that understands that the crosses of our lives are but the doors we open to bring God's promise of resurrection into our lives and the lives of those we love and serve. On this first anniversary of this parish, let us resolve to open wider our doors to all so that we can pass through and can journey together in faith as followers of Christ Our Hope.