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A Sign

Greetings,

The church bells across the street rang clear and loud signaling the start of 9:00 AM Sunday mass. The man stopped to listen, standing in the doorway of the partially demolished house. He felt somewhat guilty not attending the church with his wife and three young children, however, there was an enormous amount of work to do if their house was to be built. He partially justified his absence by claiming to himself; he was sacrificing his spiritual well being for that of his family's. Aside from this, the plans for their new home were becoming a stressful nightmare.

Earlier on, the man had explained to his wife how their family was outgrowing their current home since the shared room for their three-year-old son and five-year-old daughter would need to change and that an opportunity arose to purchase a large corner lot with a small one and a half story house on it. He was doing well in his career so they decided to buy it. They would renovate the little house and build on a large addition. They designed the renovations and the addition together and the man drew the building plans that the city engineers approved. Although an architect friend advised demolishing the old house and rebuilding would be less expensive than renovating, the couple wanted to keep the charm of the wide plank pine of the second floor and the bark covered beams of a back room, which could become a kitchen. The new addition would have a full basement, vaulted ceilings, a garage, and all the space they foreseeably would need. It was a wonderful plan to be built on a tight budget.

Not long into the demolition their plans went south. It was determined that only the second floor pine planking and two outside walls were salvageable. A new foundation, ground floor, support walls and roof were needed. Also while excavating for the new basement a hard clay layer was pierced about six feet down causing a torrent of water to pour in. The new addition would need to stand out of the ground two feet higher than planned. The man was becoming disillusioned. Was his ego and pride over shadowing good judgment? He questioned his conviction to the project. He had learned the value of perseverance at an early age, but did this plan warrant it? Instead should they completely demolish the old house, fill in the excavated basement, and sell it as a vacant lot for whatever they could get.

The final hymn for the mass ended and the man knew the benediction was being said. He was desperate about what to do with the building. So he asked his God for a sign to guide him, should they continue on or abandon the project? With that thought in his head he glanced down and spotted a dusty penny on the floor. He bent down to pick up the penny thinking, is this the sign? As his fingers clasped the penny he noticed that it sat upon a slightly raised portion of the linoleum. He pulled up the flooring to find a thin tinfoil parcel about ten inches by ten inches square. The man peeled back the tinfoil to find multiple layers of old twenty-dollar bills.

When building a house two thousand five hundred dollars is a small amount of money, however, as a sign, it is huge.

Sincerely, Tom Challen

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

