

June 27, 2021

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends in Christ,

There's a reason Tony Bennett left his heart in San Francisco. Few cities in the world can match the attractions that dot the City by the Bay. Whether it's a crab cocktail at Fisherman's Wharf, a cruise around Alcatraz Island, fresh chocolates from Ghirardelli Square, a ride down the Crookedest Street in the World, or hopping a cable car to Chinatown, there's no shortage of must-see sights.

But no visit to San Francisco is complete without a trip across the city's grandest piece of architecture - the Golden Gate Bridge. This graceful lady is known mostly for her beauty. But the truth is, sophisticated construction made her what she is.

Are you ready to be impressed? Spread out the bridge's blueprints and imagine the scope of this colossal project. And oddly enough, notice the striking similarity the bridge shares with our faith in Christ.

In 1937, after 20 years of planning and four years of construction, despite the political naysayers, geological surprises, and Mother Nature's temper tantrums, the Golden Gate Bridge was open for business. Newspapers applauded the World's Longest Suspension Bridge as "The greatest engineering masterpiece of the 20th century."

But the real story was completely overlooked. The one-of-a-kind super span had three silent partners, each a critical player in the bridge's design.

First, the strength of the bridge. Cement roadways, steel railings, and massive crossbeams made the bridge's load heavier than any bridge ever built. To support this tonnage, two massive cables were created.

Each was three-feet in diameter, incorporated 80,000 miles of woven steel wires, and was draped from Marin County to San Francisco County—a span of 1.7 miles. Both of these Herculean ropes have a tensile strength of 200 million pounds. Today they still carry the distinction as the strongest man-made cords in the world.

Second, the flexibility of the bridge. Mother Nature, who never met a bridge she couldn't push around, sweeps through the Golden Gate Strait with bone-jarring winds of 20-60 mph. And on occasion, she bursts through with a less than graceful gust of 100 mph, causing a mid-span sway of 20 feet. At her best, the bridge's maximum sway is 27 feet. In addition, summer's heat and winter's cold will expand and contract the golden steel, raising and lowering the bridge by 10 feet.

And finally, the foundation of the bridge. The real secrets of the bridge are the two massive towers and their cement platforms—equal to two sixty-five-story buildings. The weight of the entire bridge rests upon them. The great south pier, anchored a quarter mile from shore, sits directly upon the notorious and unpredictable San Andreas Fault. To earthquake-proof the bridge, the builders blasted and drilled stabilizers 100 feet into the suboceanic bedrock. The "big one" may rock and roll San Francisco, but that bridge won't feel it.

Now, note the comparison between the design of this magnificent bridge and the Father's brilliant design for His salvation.

Is His salvation strong enough to hold us?

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Check!

Is His salvation flexible enough to include anyone who comes to Him?

"All who are baptized into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Check!

Is His salvation securely based on a solid and immovable rock?

"Christ is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the first born from among the dead so that in everything He has preeminence."

Check!

Then, it's final. As impressive as the Golden Gate Bridge is, it's still just a bridge that delivers cars to the other side. Meanwhile, the salvation God provides, and that He has called us to share, has the power to deliver far, far more.

Blessings in the Risen Christ,

Pastor Lucero