

For the past two years, I lived in Saint Paul, Minnesota during the school year. In the summer of 2007, a bridge on the I-35 highway in Minneapolis collapsed during rush hour. When the causes of why the bridge failed were looked into, it came to light that over the years, the rules for inspection became less and less strict.

At first, on a regular basis, the inspector would have to get right up underneath the bridge and check things out. After a few years, possibly in the name of cost-cutting, the inspector only needed to be an arms-length away to examine the structural supports of the bridge. Several years later, the inspectors, maybe because of advances in technology, look through binoculars.

In essence, since the bridge had stayed up, and it was a hassle to get right in there to inspect, the procedure had become less and less thorough.

In the first reading, we hear about the “strong city.” We are exhorted to “trust in the Lord forever.” Those who are lacking faith, justice, and humility are “tumbled to the ground” and “trampled under foot.”

We hear Jesus tell the parable of the house built on a rock. And this is not just any rock – this rock is the Lord God. And in the Gospel, Jesus tells us how we can build on the rock of the Lord, by listening to His words and acting on them; by doing the Will of his Father.

The season of Advent gives us the opportunity to examine our own spiritual foundations. Habits we have grown into may have at one time caused us concern, but over time, we’ve looked less and less intently at them. Until it is almost like we are looking at ourselves from a distance through binoculars.

Advent gives us the chance to get right in there and reflect on the solidity of our faith, or righteousness, our justice, our humility. Instead of staying an arms-length away, we need to check our spiritual integrity up-close and hands-on.

Let us pray that we may, through grace, use these next four weeks of Advent, and do a thorough inspection of our own spiritual foundations. Not from a distance, but getting in real close. Let us pray that our wills be conformed to the Will of our Heavenly Father. And when we come to Christmas, we will be more suitable places to receive the King of Kings and Lord or Lords whom we will shortly receive at this altar.