

Address by Archbishop John Nienstedt on the occasion of his blessing of the new renovations, the buildings and grounds of Dunrovin Retreat Center, August 16th, 2009.

Dear friends and staff of the Dunrovin Christian Brothers Retreat Center,

What a great day this is! It is truly a day of joy and gratitude. As I begin my remarks today, I wish to offer a hearty congratulations to you, Mr. Meeds (director and president of the center) on the accomplishment we celebrate and bless today. You indeed should be proud.

Brother Francis Carr, you, too, should be immensely gratified by the work that this center has accomplished and will continue to accomplish into the future. This center and the programs that it offers are testaments to the vision and labors of the Christian Brothers who have assisted this local church in so many ways.

The organizations and laborers who participated in this project of renewal need to be also thanked – Open Door, the Master’s Institute, and the many construction workers who worked so hard and for so long.

Finally, I wish to also acknowledge all those donors and special friends of the Christian Brothers and of the Dunrovin Retreat Center who have contributed so generously to the projects we bless today, especially Mary Huelsmann, here today representing her brother who had such an important role in making all this possible. On behalf of the Archdiocese of which this center is an integral part, I say, “Thank you.”

The Dunrovin Retreat Center and the grounds upon which it rests have been set aside for sacred use. Not only are the sacraments celebrated here, and have been for over 40 years, but in this place of quiet and rest, this place of retreat, the weary and tired soul is able to rest with God in silence and serenity. Surrounded by such natural beauty, the pilgrim stops awhile here to be still in the presence of the Heavenly Father. As I am sure you will agree, the world in which we live, a world of cell phones, email, and non-stop news, needs quiet and silence now more than ever. And yet more and more, silence and prayer is seen as a luxury not afforded by the frenetic pace of our world. But the activity of Dunrovin is not a luxury. It is a necessity for sanity and yes, for sanctity. Without time for rest, quiet, and especially prayer, we are doomed to frustration and fatigue. “Come away by yourselves and rest awhile.” These words of Jesus Christ to his weary Apostles are addressed to us as well.

This center’s commitment to retreats for the youth is to be especially commended. Our young people need time away no less than the rest of us. And in particular, they need to be reminded, or sometimes told for the first time, that they are loved by God, a God who speaks in silence and stillness, a God who has a special plan for them and for their life. It was in the gentle breeze that God spoke to Elijah. So too here at Dunrovin, it is in the quiet moments of prayer and leisure that God invites our youth to step closer to him, perhaps even following him as a brother, a sister, or a priest.

As we bless this center today, let us thank God for the awesome gift of His presence here in this sacred space. May it continue to be a place of rest, prayer and spiritual encounter for many, many years to come.

