

Upon further review

While Mark Twain was still very much alive, one newspaper printed his obituary.

With his customary wit, Twain sent a cable from London to the U.S. press saying: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

I might say something similar about myself, as news of my move was greatly exaggerated. Unfortunately, I'm the one who exaggerated it. Let me explain.

In the March issue of the Catholic Review, I wrote about **possibly moving to Mercy Ridge**. The reason was that major renovations were planned in the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen rectory kitchen, which is directly below my apartment.

However, after two postponements of the move due to weather, I decided not to move.

Emotionally, moving is not easy, even a temporary move. As a child I had grown up in poverty, in an apartment where eviction was an everpresent possibility. Obviously, there were intense emotions that got kicked up as a result of the thought of moving.

On a more practical level, I realized that I would have no place to see all the people who come to the rectory for counseling or spiritual direction. In addition, a friend of mine suffering with progressive dementia would be greatly affected. I visit her every day. I would not be able to do that if I had to drive from the county into the city every day.

So I decided to face the physical and emotional pain straight on. It has been quite a challenge. Renovation work directly below me begins at 7 a.m., Monday through Friday. The first couple weeks were the worst, as saws and sledgehammers ripped apart cabinets, closets and floors. No ancient army destroying a walled city had anything on these workers. And I heard every smash and cut, as well as some language not commonly heard in the rectory.

For me, Lent had arrived early.

Noise is a torment all its own. I'm trying to write now despite the sounds of saws and

banging. To create, I have to go to a quiet place within myself. I'm reminded of the story of the conductor of an orchestra who kept being distracted by someone talking in the audience. The conductor stopped, turned to face the audience, and said: "You provide the silence. I'll provide the music!"

Silence has been called the language of God. Again and again in Scripture, God speaks to various people in silence. Where would we be if Moses had not heard God speaking from the burning bush, or Mary hearing the angel Gabriel speaking to her?

Right now I hear the sound of a saw in the kitchen beneath me. It's like the sound of a drill you would hear in a dentist's chair. As you might imagine, it's something less than a charming and loving sound. So this article will be a little shorter than I had hoped. I just wanted to assure you that I am still living at the cathedral rectory. I've been able to keep my residence. Please pray that I'll be able to keep my sanity!