



A Newsletter from the Missions Office/Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

What I See in the Mirror Early in the Morning is Not a Disaster, but a Miracle

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“Thank you for your support!”***

On behalf of His Excellency Frederick F. Campbell, the Bishop of Columbus, and Father Andrew Small, OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, I would like to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and financial support for the missions.

I normally do not look at myself in the mirror when I get up in the morning. But the other day I did. Oh my, what a revelation! Here I was with hair matted, pajamas wrinkled, eyes half closed. Here I was with a belly bulging, lips dried up, breath that could kill mosquitoes, armpits that smelled like a skunk, a face that could scare a dog. I did not realize how ugly I look when I get up in the morning. I wondered who could ever love such a sight.

I realized that what I saw was me – the real me. This is the me that God sees and loves. No well-pressed shirt. No tie. No matching shoes. This is the honest me. If people love me at 4:30 in the morning (that’s the time I get up), I know one thing for sure: they truly love me. They do not love me because my attire is coordinated. They do not love me because of my title, or because of

my style, or because of my accomplishments. They love me just as I am.

If they love me in that condition, their love must come from God. God’s love covers a multitude of sins. God makes perfect those who are made holy (Heb. 10:14). Perfect – not better. Perfect – not improving, not upswing. God doesn’t improve – He perfects. God doesn’t enhance – He completes.

If we are made perfect, why are we imperfect? Why do we still err? Why do we still stumble? Why do we still do the things we don’t want to do? The answer to these questions is found in the verse, “We are being made holy.” Michelangelo saw the Pieta in that huge piece of marble. He chipped it out. Matthew Kelly calls it the “better version of yourself.” A larva enters a cocoon, melts like butter and comes out a beautiful butterfly. God is not finished with us yet. We are under construction.

When it comes to our position with God, we are perfect. When God sees each one of us He sees one “who has been made perfect” by One Who is perfect – Jesus Christ. All who have been baptized into Christ are clothed in Christ (Gal. 3: 27).

When we were baptized into Christ, we died with Christ, and

our life now is hidden with Christ in God. When God sees us, He also sees Christ. He sees perfection. We did not earn this perfection. We cannot earn this perfection. Christ has paid for this perfection.

Christ had no sin. He was made sin for us so that we can be perfect in the eyes of God (2 Cor. 5: 21). Christ was made sin for us so that in Christ, we may be made good with the goodness of God. In Christ, God’s goodness is our goodness.

In Christ we are absolute perfection. No flaws. No defects or mistakes. We are unsullied and unmarred.

What a prodigy God has created! What I see in the mirror early in the morning is not a disaster. It is a miracle.

I went ahead to tidy myself. Not for God, but for my own self – for my own ego. I went ahead to tidy myself for the sake of those who sit near me. I took a hot shower, shampooed, brushed my teeth, gargled with Listerine, used Sure deodorant, shaved and applied Old Spice on my face. I wore a well-pressed white shirt, put on the most beautiful tie given to me, put on my well-polished shoes. When I fixed myself up I didn’t look that bad – for an old man.

Quip:

Do not trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.

Amazing Grace

He worked at sea from the age of eleven. He was trained well in the British Royal Navy. His father was an English shipmaster in the Mediterranean. He would have qualified to be an officer, but he ran with the wrong crowd. He lacked discipline and mocked authority. He was flogged and demoted because of his bad behavior. His name was John Newton (Wikipedia).

In his early twenties, he made his way to Africa where he worked in the slave trade industry. At twenty one he made his living on the Greyhound, a slave ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean. He ridiculed and poked fun of crewmembers who were religious.

One night the Greyhound encountered a storm at sea. John awoke to find his cabin filled with water. A side of the Greyhound had collapsed. Ordinarily such damage would have sent the ship to the bottom in a matter of minutes. The Greyhound, however, was carrying buoyant cargo and remained afloat.

John worked at the pumps the whole night. For nine hours John and the other sailors struggled to keep the ship from sinking. But John knew it was a losing cause. His hope was battered more than the ship; he pleaded, "Lord, have mercy on us all."

The Greyhound and its crew survived. John never forgot the mercy shown to him on that stormy night in the Atlantic Ocean. He returned to England where he became a prolific composer. You have sung one of

his songs: "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound! That saved a wretched like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind and now I see."

Along with writing hymns, he also became a preacher. For fifty years he told the story of a Savior who met him in a storm. A few years before he died, people urged him to give up preaching because of his failing health. "What?" He exclaimed. "Shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can still speak?"

John would not stop. He could not stop. What started as a prayer to spare him from drowning became a lifetime of faith. During his last years someone asked him about his health. He confessed: "My memory is almost gone," he said, "but I remember two things: I am a great sinner and Jesus is a great Savior."

Often faith is born out of fear. John was scared to death. But out of his fear would be born an act of faith. The Bible says that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10).

Calm situations do not demand great faith. At the beginning of every act of faith is often a seed of fear – fear of death, fear of failure, fear of loneliness, fear of a wasted life, fear of failing to know God.

Pope Francis' March Prayer Intentions:

Support for Persecuted Christians: That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

A Joke a Priest can Tell: 😄!

A priest and a bus driver both died and went to Heaven at the same time. They get to the pearly

gates where St. Peter greets them. He motions to the priest, and they both hop in a jeep and go out the back door. There are about 50 acres of rolling hills with a little cottage on the knoll.

St. Peter turns to the priest and says "This will be yours for eternity. A perfect little cottage, right next to lovely pond, a lush little garden, and a library full of books."

The priest says, "Thank you so much. This I shall enjoy!" St. Peter drops off the priest, goes back to the pearly gates and motions to the bus driver.

They hop in a stretch limo and go out the front door. There are about 500 acres of land, with mountains and lakes and rivers. There is a huge 200-room castle on one of the mountains, and a wishing well that makes wishes come true. St. Peter says "This will be yours for eternity. You can live in that castle with servants to wait on you hand and foot, and you can have everything you want."

The bus driver looks and St. Peter and says "Well, now, don't think I'm not grateful, but why am I getting so much more than the priest?"

St. Peter just laughs and says "You brought more souls to Heaven! When the priest preached, everyone fell asleep. When you drove your bus, people prayed!"

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