



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

Nothing or no one is strong enough to snatch you away from the Good Shepherd's hands

*To monthly mission donors:
"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.

A cowboy and a shepherd have similar job descriptions. Both spend their lives taking care of animals. Both spend most of their time outdoors. Neither one can take showers or change clothes often. But the similarity stops there.

A cowboy is rough with the cows. A shepherd is gentle with his sheep. The cows do not recognize the voice of the cowboy and do not obey him. The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd. He calls the sheep by name. And the sheep obey him.

I have not seen a picture of a cowboy hugging a cow. But I have seen a picture of a shepherd carrying an injured sheep on his shoulders. I am glad that Jesus calls Himself the "Good Shepherd" and not the "Good Cowboy." "The Lord is My Good Cowboy" – it does not sound right.

Psalm 23 is one of my favorites: "The Lord is my Shepherd. There is nothing I shall want. He lets me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil." What a promise! What a source of comfort! The Lord is indeed my Shepherd.

In writing it, the Psalmist does not pretend that his faith in the Lord has rescued him from the valley of the shadow of death. He is not minimizing the difficult situations in his life. No. What he is saying is that "he is truly *in* the valley of the shadow of death." That's the objective reality of where he is. In this broken world, suffering is real and difficult to face. That's the objective reality of where we find ourselves at one time or another.

Some of us have been in the valley of the shadow of death – loss of a loved one, loss of a good job, looking for work, marriage in trouble, addiction, to name a few.

If you have not been in that valley yet, praise God. I am not a prophet, but I can tell you with certainty that sometime in the future you will be in that valley. We may not fully understand it, but it is when we are in the valley of the shadow of death that we find out whether we truly know God. If we know God, we will not fear.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. A hireling is not a good shepherd. He does not care much for the animal, like the true shepherd does. When a hireling sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and flees.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. We will not perish if we follow Him. No one can snatch us from His hands. He will die first before someone can snatch us away from Him. What an amazing grace that is!

We are in Jesus' hands. What a comfort that is! Jesus has a grip on your life. No one is strong enough to take you away from the hands of Jesus. No one is strong enough to pry His fingers off of you!

No matter what the circumstances, no matter what the trial, no matter how dark the valley is, there is absolutely nothing that can take you away from Jesus' hands.

"I will not leave you orphans," Jesus says. What a promise from God! No matter what happens in our lives, God is there. At our baptism the Holy Spirit came into our hearts and dwells there. When we are in the valley of the shadow of death, the Holy Spirit shows us that we are not alone in our dark valley; that we need not fear because the Good Shepherd is with us – the One Who gave up His life for us.

Making your Will can help give you peace of mind

Many people put off making a will. "Oh, my estate is not important enough to need a will," you may say. Or "I just don't like to think about it, so I will put it off for a bit."

And the thought of making a will stays at the back of your mind, giving you a nudge from time to time.

Do you really need a will? Yes, you do. No matter how many possessions you have or how few, no matter how large your savings or how small, a will allows you to arrange for your belongings to be distributed according to your wishes at the time of your death.

Without a will your possessions and funds are distributed according to law by the state, by strangers who have no way of knowing your intentions.

It is important for your peace of mind to know that the blessings God has given you will be passed on to family and friends you love and to any charitable organizations you wish to remember.

It is also important, if you do have a will, to review it from time to time and bring it up to date.

Without a will, only your immediate family will benefit from your estate; no one else will automatically receive anything.

To ensure that your friends, your parish, and charitable organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, are included in the distribution of your estate, you must have a will.

In case of a charitable organization, you may have long had the wish to make a substantial gift but been reluctant to do so on the grounds that you might need the funds yourself. Your will allows you to make that special gift. If in life it is important to you to help spread the

Gospel, you perpetuate your passion by leaving in your will a designated amount to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Your legacy will live for generations long after you are gone.

Drawing boys to Christ through charity and gentleness

Saint John Bosco (Don Bosco) lived in Italy in the 19th century. He is most famous for his work with troubled boys who often ended up living a life of crime.

Don Bosco formed a club of boys called the "Oratory." He catechized them and instructed them along the path of virtue, often using sports as a teaching tool.

After facing so many obstacles, he eventually founded the Salesian Society, named after Saint Francis De Sales. The society founded Salesian Schools for the education of boys.

Saint John Bosco was dedicated to his task because of a dream he had. He dreamt of a prison filled with young boys from 12 to 18 years of age, all strong, healthy, intelligent, insect-bitten, lacking material and spiritual food. He was so horrified by what he saw. He wanted to do all he could to prevent them from going there.

The jail keepers were mean to the boys. They were unfair and unkind to them. In the dream Saint John Bosco heard a voice telling him, "Not with blows, but with charity and gentleness must you draw these boys to the path of virtue. This dream became his life's mission.

At the time of his death in 1888 there were 250 homes for boys founded by the Salesian Society, educating 130,000 boys. Of these, over 6,000 became priests.

Today, the Salesian Society is the second largest congregation in the Church.

"Give me souls, take away the rest" is Don Bosco's motto. It is also the motto Salesians live by.

Quip:

Experience is a hard teacher. She gives the test first, the lessons afterwards.

Quest:

A failure is a man who has blundered but is not able to cash in on the experience.

Quote:

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart. ~ **Helen Keller**

A joke a priest can tell... LOL!

The 98 year old Mother Superior from Ireland was dying. The nuns gathered around her bed trying to make her last journey comfortable. They gave her some warm milk to drink but she refused. Then one of the nuns took the glass back to the kitchen. Remembering a bottle of Irish whiskey received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened and poured a generous amount into the warm milk. Back at Mother Superior's bed, she held the glass to her lips. Mother drank a little, then a little more and before they knew it, she had drunk the whole glass down to the last drop. "Mother," the nuns asked with earnest, "please give us some wisdom before you die." She raised herself up in bed and with a pious look on her face said, "Don't sell that cow."

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