



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

A repentant heart can summon God to walk through the wall of our guilt and shame

***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.

The last the time the apostles were all together before Jesus died was in the garden on Thursday night. When the temple guards came to the garden to arrest Jesus, the disciples scattered.

When Jesus died, their hopes and dreams died with Him. With Jesus’ death the three years of training and learning under their Master went down the drain.

No one really knows what the apostles did the Saturday after Jesus’ death. Some of them may already have started to return home to their old jobs of fishing or collecting taxes; perhaps they walked through the streets of Jerusalem aimlessly, feeling lost.

But we know one thing: they came back, one by one. They came out of hiding and went back to the upper room. Even those who had started their journey home turned around and came back.

Why did the apostles come back? They came back because there was something in their hearts that would not allow them to give up. There was something in the words that Jesus had spoken that pulled them back together.

The situation was certainly awkward. They were caught between failure and forgiveness. They were too ashamed to ask forgiveness, but they were too loyal to give up. They felt too guilty to be counted in, but they were too faithful to be counted out.

All of us have been in situations similar to the one the apostles were in. We have seen our sandcastles swept away by the waves of panic and insecurity; we have seen our promises of loyalty negated by fear and fright; we have done things we swore we could never do. Like the apostles, we have walked the streets of our own Jerusalem, aimlessly.

Did the apostles come back because they heard rumors about the resurrection? That had to be part of it. They had seen Jesus do things that were unusual – like forgiving a woman who had five husbands; or having lunch with crooked Zacchaeus; or scaring the devil out of demoniacs; or scolding church leaders and teachers of the law. They had seen sick people cured and the dead coming

back to life. They could not just pack their bags and go home.

They thought, “Maybe he really is risen from the dead.” But they did not return just because they heard rumors about an empty tomb. There was something in their hearts that would not let them leave. Whatever excuse they could come up with, it was not good enough to erase the fact that they had betrayed Jesus. They ran away when Jesus needed them. Now they had to deal with the shame. They were seeking forgiveness, but they did not know where to find it.

So they went back to the upper room. The fact that they came back tells us that those who knew Jesus could not stand to be in Jesus’ disfavor. For the apostles there were only two options – to come back, or to commit suicide. It also tells us that those who knew Jesus knew that although they had done exactly what they promised they would not do, they still would find forgiveness.

For those of us who, like the apostles, have turned and run when we should have stayed and fought, we can now come out of hiding. A repentant heart is enough to summon God to walk through the walls of our guilt and shame. He who forgave His disciples stands ready to forgive the rest of us. All we have to do is come back.

We can't be hard on Judas

While Jesus was climbing the hill of Calvary with a cross on His back, Judas too was climbing another hill – the hill of guilt, shame and regret.

The path that Judas journeyed through was barren – as barren as his own soul. The path was strewn with pebbles and stones – the rocks of shame, guilt and regret.

Judas too carried a burden on his back. But it was not a cross. It was the burden of sin – the burden of regret.

Have you ever climbed a hill of regret? I have. I praise God that I found God's forgiveness. There are some people who do not know where to find forgiveness. So they spend hours climbing the hill of regret. Up the hill they climb, carrying the burden on their backs.

At the top of the hill that Judas climbed was a tree. Though it was dead it was still sturdy. The bark and leaves were gone. Twigs and buds no longer sprouted. There were only dead branches that forked from the trunk. On its strongest dead branch hung a hangman's noose. It was on this dead tree that Judas dealt with his sin.

If only Judas had looked at the adjacent tree – the tree at Calvary. The tree at Calvary was dead too. But there was no hangman's noose on the beam. One death was enough for all. It is interesting to see that the very first sin was committed at a tree and forgiveness for sin was given at another tree.

Those of us who have betrayed Jesus know better than to be hard on Judas for choosing the tree that he chose. To believe that Jesus can forgive us for betraying Him

is as difficult to believe that He rose from the dead. In fact, both are miraculous.

Pope Francis' April Prayer Intention:

That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

A joke a priest can tell... LOL!

The story is told of a lady who was rather old-fashioned, always quite delicate and elegant, especially in her language.

She and her husband were planning a week's vacation in Florida, so she wrote to a particular campground asking for a reservation.

She wanted to make sure the campground was fully equipped, but didn't quite know how to ask about the toilet facilities. She just couldn't bring herself to write the word "toilet" in her letter.

After much deliberation, she finally came up with the old-fashioned term BATHROOM COMMODE. But when she wrote that down, she still thought she was being too forward. So she started all over and rewrote the entire letter referring to the bathroom commode merely as the BC. "Does the campground have it's own BC?" is what she actually wrote.

Well, the campground owner wasn't old-fashioned at all, and when he got the letter, he just couldn't figure out what the woman was talking about. That BC business really stumped him.

He showed the letter to several campers, but they couldn't imagine what the lady meant either. So the campground owner came to the conclusion that the lady must

be asking about the local Baptist Church, and wrote a reply:

Dear Madam: I regret the delay in answering your letter, but I take pleasure in informing you that a BC is located nine miles north of the campground and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. It is quite a distance away, if you are in the habit of going regularly, but you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late. It is such a beautiful facility and the acoustics are marvelous. Even the normal delivery sounds can be heard.

The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. It may interest you to know that right now a supper is planned to raise money to buy more seats. They are going to hold it in the basement of the BC.

I would like to say it pains me very much not to be able to go more regularly, but it surely is no lack of desire on my part. As we grow old, it seems to be more of an effort, particularly in cold weather.

If you do decide to come down to our campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time you go, sit with you, and introduce you to all the other folks. Remember, this is a friendly community.

Sincerely, Campground Owner

*Leandro (Lany) Tapay, Director
Gina Sergio, Education Coordinator*

*Visit us on the web at
www.columbuscatholic.org*

 Follow us on Twitter

 Like us on Facebook

 Follow us on Pinterest