



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

Salvation is not for Good People

To monthly mission donors: Thank you for your support!

On behalf of His Excellency Robert Brennan, the Bishop of Columbus, and Very Rev. 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.

We are a tired people. We are a tired generation and a tired society. On Sunday nights, we do not look forward to Monday mornings. On Monday mornings, we look forward to Friday's; TGIF. Every time we catch a breath, someone needs something else. We are like the Jews who were slaves in Egypt. A taskmaster demands another brick to build the pyramid.

Then, God intervened: "I am the Lord. I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and will deliver you from their slavery. I will redeem you by my outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment." (Ex. 6: 6)

And did He ever. God split the Red Sea so they could get out from Egypt; When Pharaoh and his charioteers pursued them in the Red Sea, God drowned them. God rescued them from their slavery.

However, as you know, not long after God rescued them from their slavery, they wanted to go back to Egypt. Can you imagine that? After the miracles God had performed, they wanted to be slaves again in Egypt!

If we think that they were crazy people, so are we. Though Jesus had freed us from the slavery of sin, we tend to go back to our sinful past. We tend to go back to our sinful life. We tend to turn away from the freedom Jesus had earned for us. We tend to go back to our own Egypt.

As God sent Moses to free the Jewish people from their slavery of the Egyptians, God sent Jesus to us to free us from the slavery of sin. As Moses smote Pharaoh, Jesus smote the devil. As Moses used the ten plagues to free them, Jesus used the cross to free us. As Moses split the Red Sea to free the Jewish people, Jesus opened the grave to free us from death. As Moses led the Jewish people to the Promised Land, Jesus leads us to Heaven.

The Jewish people did not enter the Promised Land through their own power. They entered the Promised Land because of God's power. Their salvation was from God.

So is ours. We cannot earn eternal life. Eternal life is a gift from God. No matter how much we try, or no matter how good we become, our human goodness is not enough.

How then could we go to Heaven? God has the answer to the question: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). We contribute nothing to our salvation. Nada. We cannot earn our salvation, as if a boy scout earns his badge. Our salvation is a pure gift of God. We cannot merit it. It is God's merit.

We tend to believe that salvation is just for good people. This is not true. As Jesus said, that He did not come for good people. Rather, He came for sinners. While on earth, Jesus was accused of hanging around with the wrong crowd; sinners. He partied with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees, who claimed to be good people, were scandalized by Jesus' behavior and attitude toward sinners.

Jesus loves sinners. In fact, the first person who entered heaven was a criminal crucified near Jesus. Before Jesus died on the cross, Jesus said to the criminal: "Today, you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). As far as we could infer, the criminal lived a sinful life that put him on death row. Yet, he spent not even a minute in purgatory. And the first witness to His resurrection was a woman who was formerly possessed by seven devils. So never lose hope in the salvation that God offers!

Have a blessed Triduum!

Christ is Risen!

They were scared to death. They locked the door – dead-bolted it. The authorities just killed their leader and they were scared that they were next. Not only were they afraid, they also felt guilty for abandoning their leader when he needed them most. They did not know what else to do, but hid in the Upper Room.

If you look and observe these men in the Upper Room you would never think that they were about to change the world and history. They did not have the right qualifications. They did not have the right credentials. These men were confused and full of fear. They had no diplomas. They had a heavy accent. They had calloused hands. They had no money. They lacked social graces. They had limited knowledge of the world.

But something happened to the people who encountered a man who was dead and came back to life. Something happened to the people who encountered the risen Christ.

The Church was started with eleven stammering and stuttering Apostles. Though the door was locked, Jesus came into the room and stood in their midst and said: “Peace! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

And sent them Jesus did! They went everywhere. They went to courtyards, ports, synagogues, prisons and palaces. Their message of the risen Christ spread across the civilized world. Would it be great if this could happen again?

Some say this could not happen again. The world has become too secular. Others say that this could not happen in the digital age; that this is an age of information and

not transformation. And so, we lock the door out of fear that the world will intrude.

As a result, the Gospel has not touched many parts of the world. Many people have not heard the story of Jesus, the Messiah and God’s message of love and salvation.

What would it take to light the fire again? Somehow, the Apostles in the Upper Room did it. They did it without dragging their feet. They did it without making excuses. For each one of them it was obvious. “All I know is that Jesus was dead. And now He is alive.”

Maybe we all need to revisit the Upper Room so we can hear again our own commission to tell the world that Jesus has risen from the dead – and that Jesus will come back again.

Happy Easter!

You do not have to sleep under the bridge anymore

Two days after Christmas in 2012, Timothy Henry Gray was found dead under a Wyoming underpass. There was no sign of foul play. The homeless man died of hypothermia.

As things turned out, the homeless man was not poor after all. Gray was a nephew of a millionaire heiress and he was to inherit 19 million dollars. His aunt died in 2011 and at Gray’s death, the execution of the will was tied up in the New York court.

Surely, Timothy Gray knew his family history. But it was sad that he did not investigate about his inheritance.

Let us not act like Timothy Gray. We are not merely a slave, or a servant of God. We are children of God. We have legal rights to God’s family business. The will

has been executed. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

We have everything we need to become what God wants us to become. Our Father is rich. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

You do not have to sleep under the overpass anymore. You are a new person. Act like one. It is time for you to live out of your inheritance.

Quote:

Life is like riding a bicycle. Keep your balance and keep moving. ~ Albert Einstein

Pope Francis’ April Prayer Intention:

For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war torn areas, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

A joke a priest can tell...



No English dictionary has been able to explain the difference between two words; “complete” and “finished”.

Some people say there is no difference. But there is.

When you marry the right woman, you are complete. When you marry the wrong woman, you are finished.

And when you marry a woman who likes shopping, you are completely finished.

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