

March 15, 2020

Volume XII Issue 3

# ITE MISSA EST



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

## *Saint Joseph, pray for us!*

### ***To monthly mission donors: Thank you for your support!***

On behalf of His Excellency Robert J. 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.

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The month of March is dedicated to Saint Joseph. We do not know a lot about Saint Joseph.

We know that his father's name was Jacob and that he was the husband of Mary. We know that he was a carpenter; that after he was engaged to Mary, he found out that Mary was pregnant; that in order to protect Mary's reputation, he decided to divorce Mary quietly.

The Gospels describe Joseph as an upright and righteous man. But in the Gospels, there is no mention of Joseph saying anything.

We know that Joseph followed the law. He observed the religious law – he went to Jerusalem for the Jewish festivals. He followed the civil law – he went to Bethlehem for the census. We know that Joseph had dreams and he followed what God told him in his dreams.

It is interesting that the Gospels never mention Joseph saying anything. He said nothing. But he was a man of action. He did what the angel told him – he took Mary as his wife; he went to Bethlehem; he found a stable for the night; he took his family to Egypt. Joseph was not a man of words. He was a man of action.

Over the centuries, scholars and artists have tried to figure out Joseph's words. Michael Card, an American singer and songwriter wrote a Christmas song about Joseph. It is one of my favorite Christmas songs. I love the words Michael Card put in Joseph's mouth. Did Joseph say them? I doubt it.

Here are the lyrics to that song:

***How could it be this baby in  
my arms***

***Sleeping now, so peacefully***

***The Son of God, the angel said.***

***How could it be***

***Lord I know he is not my own,***

***Not my flesh, not my bone***

***Still Father let this baby be***

***The son of my love.***

***Father show me where I fit into  
this plan of yours***

***How can a man be a father to  
the Son of God***

***Lord for all my life I have been a  
simple carpenter***

***How can I raise a king ...***

What a model Joseph is to us! He is a man after God's will. He longed to see God's will. He searched to see how he fit to the Father's plan.

And just like God had a plan for Joseph, God has a plan for each of us. As God did for Joseph, God gives us dreams and God speaks to us in our dreams.

Just like Joseph, we may not see the fruit of our labor. We may never reap the harvest. So did the many heroes in Scriptures.

It was promised to David that his line will continue forever. But David did not live long enough to see the promise fulfilled.

Abraham did God's will. God promised to give him land. But Abraham never saw the fulfillment of God's promise to him. But the promise was fulfilled.

Joseph may have been a simple carpenter, but he is one of the greatest saints in the Church. In 1870, Joseph was declared Patron of the universal Church.

Let us allow Saint Joseph to guide us and help us open our hearts to God's plan; that we may be upright and righteous; that we may be women and men after God's will; that we may be able to pray, "Father, show me how I fit into this plan of yours".

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***Lord, grant us grace  
to seek your advice in  
every decision we make.***

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## ***Stop chasing after dust***

Pope Francis characterized Lent as a wake up call.

“Return to me.” God is calling us. If we have to return, we must have wandered off.

Pope Francis said that Lent is a time to rediscover the direction of life.

Life is a journey. If we are distracted we will not get far.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, “Are we seeking to go forward?” Or, “Are we satisfied with living in the moment, and thinking only of feeling good, solving some problems and having some fun?”

The Pope said the mark of ashes we received on Ash Wednesday, helps us find our direction.

The sign reminds us that every perishable thing we see, will in the end, fade away.

We will take no material possession with when we die. Earthly realities will fade away like dust in the wind. Possessions are temporary. Power passes. Success wanes.

Our culture persuades us to live for perishable things. This is a deception. It is like a blaze. Once ended, only ashes remain.

Lent is the time to free ourselves from the illusion of chasing after dust and for rediscovering that we are created for God - not for this world.

God created us for the freedom of the children of God - not for slavery to things.

There are three steps we take during Lent - almsgiving, prayer and fasting.

These three steps bring us back to the three realities that do not fade away - Prayer, which unites us with God; Almsgiving which

unites us with our neighbors; And fasting which unites us to our own selves.

God, neighbor and our life - are realities that do not fade away, We need to invest in them.

We need to avoid things that can enslave us and can cause us to lose direction.

Whereas, if our hearts are attached to what does not pass away, we rediscover ourselves and are set free.

Lent is a time of grace. It liberates the heart from vanity. It heals us. It helps us focus on what is lasting.

Jesus on the cross is life’s compass. He directs us to Heaven.

(From Pope Francis’ Homily on Ash Wednesday 2019).

## ***God delights and answers your prayers***

If you are a Christian, you have clout. You belong to the most powerful being in the universe. When you speak, God listens. When you pray God listens.

“When two of you get together on anything at all on earth, and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action” (Matt. 18:19).

God gives us not only forgiveness for our past. He also gives authority in the present and rule in the future. Our life on earth is a training for eternity. God prepares us to reign with Him ( 2 Tim. 2:12). We are parts of God’s family.

Ruling the universe is the family business. When you, as a child of God, seek to honor the family business, God honors your request.

God listens to your prayers because you are a child of God. Will God do what you ask?

Perhaps. Or, perhaps, God will do more than you imagined. God knows what is best.

Stand by this promise of God, “When a believing person prays, great things happen (James 5:16).

Prayer is not the last resort. It is the first step. God has power you never have seen.

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## ***Pope Francis’ March prayer intention:***

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

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***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

***Quest:*** One of the hardest secrets for man to keep, is the opinion of himself.

***Quip:*** He who has a sharp tongue usually cuts his own throat.

## ***A joke a priest can tell...***



In a wedding ceremony, the priest told the groom, “You are the pillar of the house”.

To the bride, “You are the light of the house”.

“Hey, what about me, Father?” asked the mother-in-law.

The priest looked at her and said, “You are the termite of the house.”

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

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