

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

offered by Leaders of the Diocese of Toliara



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Evangelism in Madagascar

By The Rev. Victor Osoro

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in the
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***Go into all the world and preach the gospel
to all creation.” Mark 16:15***

The culture of Madagascar, especially in the rural southern area where the Diocese of Toliara is situated, is quite different from that in the UK, Europe, and the US. Where those areas are predominately Judeo-Christian, many Malagasy are hearing of Jesus for the very first time when we go out to the small villages to evangelize. While Christianity was introduced to this island nation in the early 1800's, there have also been times when the practice of Christianity was banned. Today, we see a great many people who have never heard of Jesus. They lead lives governed by local social mores that are decidedly different from what you in the West would find as the norm. They more often practice their Malagasy traditional religion which would

be led by a shaman and a medicine man. So, when we venture out to the countryside to evangelize, we must start from a very different place. We start from the very basics of the Christian faith and the story of Jesus.

One day when we were evangelizing, we came to a village to share the gospel with the village elder. He surrendered his life to Jesus – but he did not stop there. He called all the villagers and shared what the Lord had done in his heart. Everyone present, knowing the past life of the man and hearing what the Lord had done in his life, they too surrendered their lives to the new-found faith. They committed to begin a new walk with Christ. Many of them gave up their trust in the medicine man and put their trust in the Lord. We had to burn all types of charms created by the medicine man for various purposes that they had in their homes! They are now growing as disciples of Christ.

The Lord sends us to go into all the world to preach the gospel to all creation. We recognize man cannot save himself, but that God has provided our salvation with the Cross. Jesus exchanged His righteous, holy nature for our sinful nature. The old sin nature is gone forever so that we can stand before God completely clean and pure: new creations reconciled to Himself through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). God provided the perfect sacrifice for our sin, not because we deserved it or earned it, but because of His love and grace and mercy (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The message to the Malagasy:

We are all born in sin, and we cannot save ourselves. No amount of sacrifice to the ancestors can do that. Believing in Christ is the only way to salvation which will give us a new nature in Christ.

We all are called to share the good news with the masses who still dwell in the old nature and are in the darkness. Our call is to share the light of Christ! For those of us here in the Diocese of Toliara who are charged with the responsibility of Evangelism – sharing the Light of Christ – our Lenten discipline is in renewing our commitment to our vows as ministers of the Gospel. We the Priests, Deacons, and Evangelists of this diocese recommit our lives and ministries to our duty to share the Good News!

We ask that you, too, examine your commitment in sharing the Good News. Share the Light in your own neighborhood. Help us share the Good News by considering a commitment of financial support to the Bishop Todd & Rev. Patsy McGregor Diocese of Toliara Endowment Fund so that this work can continue here in Madagascar. You will be richly blessed as we are blessed delivering Jesus' message to our neighbors here.

Blessings,

Victor+

The Rev. Victor Osoro
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