

April 2008 – General Intention

That Christians may never tire of proclaiming with their lives that Christ's Resurrection is the true source of hope and peace.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

After the long journey of Lent, we are filled with Easter joy. The traditional Easter greeting rings out, "He is Risen!" and we are eager to respond, "He is Risen indeed!" These spring days of the Easter season bring new hope and peace to our hearts.

The Easter season is a time of fresh beginnings - just as Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead, new life springs forth from the cold, hard earth. The trees become green with new leaves, and the tulips, daffodils, and crocus bring new color to the browns and grays of winter. It seems like it is just easier to "feel" the truth of Christ's Resurrection and our hope in the Resurrection of the Dead as the natural world around us is transformed from the deep sleep of winter-time to the freshness of spring. However, for everything there is a season...

Soon spring will pass and the long hot days of summer will return again. Then our days will be filled with picnics and fishing, with gardening and swimming, and the endless activities of summertime. Just when we have enjoyed all of the grilled hotdogs and hamburgers, watermelon and corn on the cob, that our bellies can possibly hold, the chill of fall will come again. Our memory of the first spring flowers and the first garden sprouts will have faded. As autumn begins, we might find it strange to hear someone proclaim, "He is Risen!" We would probably even forget to reply, "He is Risen indeed!" How quickly we forget the joy of Easter...



Indeed, many of the difficulties that we face in everyday life can weigh us down and steal away our joy, hope, and peace. When someone we love becomes very sick, when our best friend has to move away, when a pet dies... it might seem like everything is falling apart. However, no matter how bad things seem, or how sad we are, we must remember that it is only for a season of our lives. Soon the sun will shine again and God will work out these difficulties for our good. In the end our true joy, hope, and peace always remains. "Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!" Let us pray this month that we will never tire of giving witness with our lives to this great truth.

Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.

Written by Kristy Linnhoff – Copyright 2008

April 2008 – Mission Intention

That future priests in the young Churches may be ever more seriously formed culturally and spiritually to evangelize their nations and the whole world.

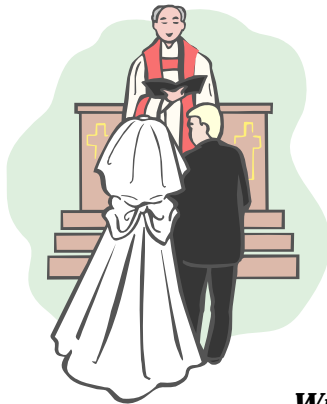


Can you imagine walking miles and miles each week to attend a Sunday Mass? Think of what it would be like to travel long distances by foot and then wait in line for hours simply to go to Confession once a year before Easter. This is what many, many Catholic Christians throughout the world go through simply to live out their faith. In places like Nigeria in Africa there are not many priests, and a lot of the people live in rural villages without a parish church or priest. These Catholics often have to make big sacrifices just to receive the Sacraments.

This is a great challenge for the "young Churches", the Catholic Churches in missionary territories. This may not be something that you have ever thought about before - what happens after missionaries proclaim the Gospel message and new believers join the Church in lands where the Church has not existed before? Of course there are often no parish churches or local priests. It takes a long time for the Church to slowly grow and for vocations to grow among the native people. The nice parish life that most of us enjoy takes years and years to develop.



This month, Pope Benedict XVI asks us to join him in prayer for the formation of priests in these young Churches. The formation of priests is one of the most important responsibilities of the Church. Jesus commanded the twelve Apostles to go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded (Matt 28:19-20). He also commanded the Apostles to always celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He told them, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). Without priests the Church cannot do these things that Jesus has asked.



Now more than ever, the world needs good priests - men who desire to grow in holiness and eagerly respond to God's call, men who have received the very best training possible. Let us join Pope Benedict in prayer this month that these shepherds would not be rushed through formation but have access to the very best the Church has to offer. Let us pray that priests throughout the world would become very good shepherds.

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