

Reflections

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Catholic Family Newsletter

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Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

The Helpers of Satan-The New Order

What was Mass like for the early Christians?

Elijah

St Matthew The Apostle

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*****THOUGHT FOR TODAY*****

God places the value of the soul at an incalculable price, for by the blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ, are sins forgiven and souls cleansed. This is a priceless gift beyond measure. People place great value on their physical well-being, their belongings and even their experiences. Many of these same people that value possessions, place **"no"** value on their eternal soul. Life for these people is lived for "today" and they give little thought about where they will spend eternity. Your Eternity-Your Choice.

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

The 'New World Order' that Satan's helpers are marching too is that humans are god's and can be and do anything they wish. **"They state that the 'New World Order' must rise in the world to achieve peace and happiness."** And God is not a part of their plan. They teach others to disobey God's moral law with their cunning words that smell of Hell itself. The evil one, thrown out of Heaven, is waging the last battle for the kingdom of all mankind. Yes, this is the last battle. The final battle for souls has long ago sounded.

You can see the hatred the evil one has for humans, by the killing of the innocent in the womb. The unprotected babies. The evil one is a coward and hides from the "Truth". **In order for Satan to influence humans, he has to have helpers...human helpers.** Have you seen any of Satan's helpers?



These human helpers, whether they be in government, law enforcement, political parties, or agencies that kill babies in the womb, have thrown God's moral law out the window. **They are saying and telling others that "Men and Women can follow their own Moral Rules, like the pro-abortion signs that read... My Body, My Choice. "**

Boko Haram...Satan's Helpers

Satan's helpers like Boko Haram leaders, use the threat of death, for any member who wants to leave the group and go home. This fear keeps many thousands of their young men from leaving. But a story in the ¹New York Time, in September 2021 shows that over 7,000 young men left Boko Haram after one of their leaders committed suicide. The turning point appears to have been the death of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's longtime leader, who blew himself up in May after being cornered by a rival faction.

The Times stated that thousands of Boko Haram fighters have surrendered, along with their family members, and are being housed by the government in a compound in the city of Maiduguri, the group's birthplace and its frequent target.

The compound is next to a middle-class housing development and a primary school, terrifying residents, teachers, and parents.

¹ <https://bdnews24.com/world/africa/thousands-of-boko-haram-members-surrendered.-they-moved-in-next-door>

"We are very afraid," said Maimouna Mohammed, a teacher at the primary school, glancing at the camp's wall 50 yards from her classroom. "We don't know their minds."

Nigerian military and justice officials say that in the past month, as many as 7,000 fighters and family members, along with their captives, have left Boko Haram, the largest wave of defections by far since the jihadi group emerged in 2002.

Rosary Crusade For Africa

I urge all those in Africa that are facing gangs like Boko Haram to start a **Rosary Crusade to rid Africa of the helpers of Satan**. Talk to your Parish Priests and Bishops. Start small in the church you go to on Sundays and tell others. **Our Blessed Mother will help**. Take up your Rosaries and march around your village or town or area that has these helpers of Satan. Praying your Rosary and singing songs. Let Our Blessed Mother help you. She will go to her son Jesus in your behalf.



Say My Rosary. I am here, Your Mother and I will help you. Start a Rosary Crusade in your Parish and tell other Parishes to join you.

Be a Light to Others in These Times of Trials

St Paul also warns, “**There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power.**”

It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.
Psalm 118:8

Though the evil in our world can seem overwhelming, it has by no means overcome the goodness of God. God’s children—**those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12)—live in this world as ambassadors and lights (2 Corinthians 5:20–21)**. Christians are tasked with sharing the good news about Jesus with the world (Matthew 28:18–20) and demonstrating His character through actively loving others (Galatians 6:9–10). The Holy Spirit resides in us and ‘nothing’ will separate us from God’s love, not even the darkest evil (Romans 8:28–39).

Romans 12 gives advice for how to be a “living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1). As regards evil, we are told, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9); “Do not repay anyone evil for evil” (Romans 12:17); and “Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).



The “*evil one*” no longer hides from the world. Satan and all of his human helpers boldly proclaim they are themselves as god’s. These immoral helpers of Satan are at work to bring other souls to Hell. They tell lies but proclaim them as *moral truths*! They have a terrible punishment awaiting them. They will have all eternity to voice their hatred for God. In Hell the

flames and the smell of burning flesh will be their eternal reward for the evil that they brought upon themselves. You evil doers in Africa will one day meet the Justice of Jesus Christ. While you still have breath in you, choose to seek forgiveness for your evil ways. **Time for you is running out.**

The last battle between Our Blessed Mother and Satan and all his demons and human helpers is fast approaching. God has told us, that Our Blessed Mother will be victorious. Remember Genesis 3:15. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.*"



The Warning From Our Lady of Medjugorje of the Coming Chastisement



Medjugorje is a place that Mary has appeared for over 40 years and she tells us of the coming Chastisements. The Blessed Mother has often said that this time in history is a special time of grace. She says her time on earth has been granted to the world by God and we must accept this special time of grace with our hearts.

However, Our Lady warns that much of humanity will reject these graces and that consequences can be expected.

Visionary Miryana, rather ominously, has said: "Our Lady's messages here, prepare us for what is to come. "This is a time of great grace and mercy. Now is the time to listen to these messages and to change our lives. Those who do will never be able to thank God enough."

All of this was confirmed by top Vatican Mariologist Rene Laurentine. Citing testimonies of the visionaries , he wrote to Pope John Paul II saying: **"According to the visionaries, The ninth and tenth secrets are grave matters. They are a chastisement for the sins of the world. The punishment is inevitable because we cannot expect the conversion of the entire world. The chastisement can be mitigated by prayers and penance. It cannot be suppressed. After the first warning, the others will follow within a rather brief period of time. So it is that people will have time for conversion. This time is a period of grace and conversion. After the visible sign, those who are still alive will have little time for conversion. For that reason, the Blessed Virgin calls for urgent conversion and reconciliation. The invitation to prayer and penance is destined to ward off evil and war and above all to save souls. We are close to the events predicted by the Blessed Virgin. Convert yourselves as quickly as possible. Open your hearts to God. This is a message to all mankind."**

Which road are you on? The road to salvation or the road to Hell.

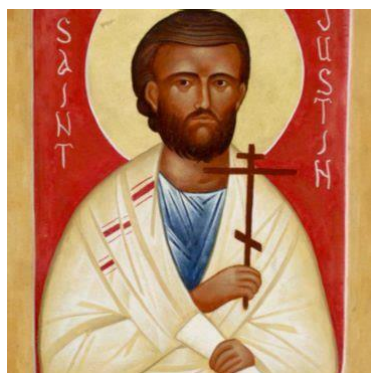


What was Mass like for the early Christians?

The early beginnings of the celebration of the Mass...

Holy Thursday marks the Institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. It is when Jesus exhorted his disciples to "do this in memory of me." While this first Eucharist was celebrated in the context of the Jewish Passover, the early Christians soon distinguished themselves by offering the Eucharist on a regular basis and developing their own traditions.

What was it like, 2,000 years ago? How did the early Christians celebrate Mass? In fact, we have an accurate description of this celebration from a saint of the early Church.



St. Justin Martyr, who lived between 100 and 165, was a philosopher and Christian apologist. He desired greatly to share his newfound Christian faith and to explain it in a way that would be understood by the pagans of the Roman Empire.

St. Justin proceeded to submit an account of Christian worship to the Roman Emperor in order to clear up many misconceptions. Below is an excerpt from his "**First Apology**" that details the early liturgy of the Christian Church. It will look quite familiar to the Catholic Mass celebrated today.

"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs [letters] of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president [the presiding priest or bishop] verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.

Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president (priest) in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president (priest), who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and

those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

*And this food is called among us **Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist]**, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. **For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.***

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, This do in remembrance of Me, [Luke 22:19] this is My body; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, This is My blood; and gave it to them alone.

What is the origin of the word "Mass" in the context of Church?

The name comes from the Latin word missa. In Latin the Mass ended with *Ite missa est* which translated into English means "Go, it is sent," the "it" being the Church. The Mass gets its name from the liturgical dismissal at its conclusion.

Missa was spoken at the end of the liturgy of the word (dismissal of catechumens) and at the end of Mass (dismissal after the Eucharist). It was some time after Gregory the Great (d. 604) that the word was applied to the entire liturgy.

While there may be simple cultural reasons why this took place, there is an interesting theology to be gleaned from the entire liturgy taking its name from the dismissal. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) was to go out to all the world and preach the Gospel. As Christians we are called to gather and worship but also to go out and proclaim the Gospel through our lives. It is not an either/or but a both/and situation.

Elijah



There are many great prophets in the Old Testament, but one is considered the greatest. Elijah was a prophet who stood for God despite huge obstacles, performed dramatic miracles, and became a symbol of the role that John the Baptist would fill ("Elijah must come first..."). Despite the many powerful moments in Elijah's life, he also had times of doubt and struggle, making him one of the more complex Old Testament figures. Here's an overview of this fascinating man's life. Elijah was the loftiest and most wonderful prophet of the Old Testament. What we know of his public life is sketched in a few popular narratives enshrined, for the most part, in the First (Chapter 17 & 18) Book of Kings.

Before Elijah actually arrives in Israel, God sends a drought as he is so displeased with the people. Elijah had been residing out in the desert where there was a river with drinking water and God had sent ravens to bring him food.



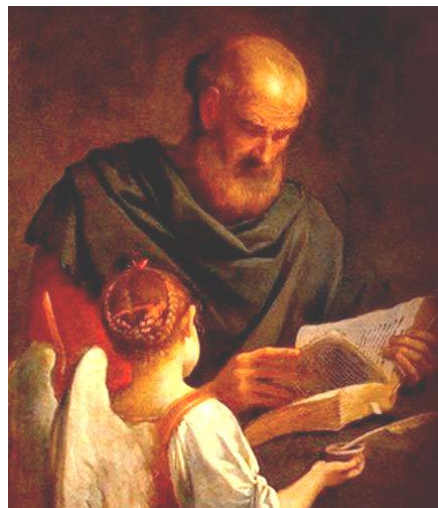
Eventually, the river also dries up and God instructs Elijah to go to the home of a widow who will provide him with food. When Elijah comes to the town of Zarephath, he sees the widow and asks her to get him some water and bread. She replies that she only has a small amount of flour and oil and is collecting sticks so she can cook this last portion of bread as the last meal for her son and herself. Elijah assures her that God will not allow their food to diminish until the rain returns. The widow trusted Elijah and their food lasted until it rained again.



Sometime later, the widow's son became ill and passed away. The widow was very troubled, believing that Elijah was the reason for this tragedy. Though Elijah was blamed by the widow, he attempted to bring the boy back to life by praying to God. In a miraculous event, God heard Elijah and answered his prayers, and brought the boy back to life. When Elijah returned the boy to his mother, the woman could recognize that Elijah was a man of God and was amazed.

St. Matthew

Part II of a series on the four Gospel Writers



Saint Matthew, the first-century tax collector turned apostle who chronicled the life and ministry of Christ in his Gospel, is celebrated by the Church today, on September 21. Although relatively little is known about the life of St. Matthew, the account he wrote of Christ's ministry – traditionally considered to be the first of the four Gospels – is of inestimable value to the Church, particularly in its verification of Jesus as the Messiah.

Eastern Catholics and the Orthodox churches celebrate St. Matthew on November 16, along with St. Fulvianus, a prince who is recorded in some traditions as converting from paganism after Matthew's martyrdom.

The Gospel accounts of Mark and Luke, like Matthew's own, describe the encounter between Jesus and Matthew under the surprising circumstances of Matthew's tax-collecting duties. Jewish publicans, who collected taxes on behalf of the Roman rulers of first-century Judea, were objects of scorn and even hatred among their own communities since they worked on behalf of the occupying power and often earned their living by collecting more than the state's due.

Jesus most likely first encountered Matthew near the house of Peter, in Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee. The meeting of the two was dramatic, as Matthew's third-person account in his Gospel captured: "As Jesus passed on," the ninth chapter recounts, "he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, 'Follow me'. And he got up and followed him."

Matthew's calling into Jesus' inner circle was a dramatic gesture of the Messiah's universal message and mission, causing some religious authorities of the Jewish community to wonder: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus' significant response indicated a central purpose of his ministry: **"I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."**

A witness to Christ's resurrection after death, as well as his ascension into heaven and the events of Pentecost, Matthew also recorded Jesus' instruction for the apostles to "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."



Like 11 of the 12 apostles, St. Matthew is traditionally thought to have died as a martyr while preaching the Gospel. The Roman Martyrology describes his death as occurring in a territory near present-day Egypt, by a weapon called a halberd.

Reflecting on St. Matthew's calling, from the pursuit of dishonest financial gain to the heights of holiness and divine inspiration, Pope Benedict said in 2006 that "in the figure of Matthew, the Gospels present to us a true and proper paradox: those who seem to be the farthest from holiness can even become a model of the acceptance of God's mercy and offer a glimpse of its marvelous effects in their own lives."

The Helpers of Satan in Nigeria

**Gunmen kidnapped 287 school children in Nigeria.
\$622,000 ransom or children will be killed.**



Gunmen who kidnapped at least 287 school children in Nigeria on **March 7, 2024**, have demanded a ransom of 1 billion naira (\$621,848) and threatened to kill all of the students if their demands are not met. The Gangs responsible said the kidnapping was "a way of getting back at the government and security agencies for killing their gang members.

"They called me from a hidden number yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon at around 16 minutes past 12 and demanded 1 billion naira (\$621,848) as a ransom for the students. They said [the ultimatum] will only last for three weeks or 20 days from the date they kidnapped the children and if there's

no action from the government, they will kill all of them," said Aminu Jibril, a resident of Kuriga village, in Kaduna state, where the school is located. a member of the community who confronted the abductors during the attack was killed.

Kaduna state, which borders the Nigerian capital Abuja to the southwest, has grappled with recurring incidents of kidnappings for ransom by bandits and has witnessed several mass abductions in recent years, including in the district where the LEA Primary and Secondary School is located.

In 2021, at least 140 students were kidnapped by armed men from a private secondary school.

The incident came just months after around 20 students from a private university in Chikun's Kasarami village were abducted by gunmen.

Five of those students were killed after a ransom deadline was not met. Nigeria has suffered some of the worst jihadist attacks in the region, with the government struggling to control the north-east of the country where the Boko Haram movement evolved.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram has been responsible for over "37,500 combat-related deaths and over 19,000 deaths from terrorism since 2011, mainly in Nigeria" but also neighboring countries.



Children have been among those most impacted by Boko Haram's string of atrocities carried out over large swathes of Northeast Nigeria for nearly a decade. The armed group's classic tactics have included attacks on schools, widespread abductions, recruitment, and use of child soldiers, and forced marriage of girls and young women, which all constitute horrible crimes against the children of God. The scale of abductions has often been

underestimated and appears to run into the thousands. Boko Haram continues to force parents to hand over boys and girls, under threat of death. It continues to forcibly “marry” girls and young women. And it continues to murder people who try to escape.

Photo of Boko Haram kidnapped girls.



Children in areas under Boko Haram control have been subjected to torture, including floggings and other beatings, as well as forced to watch public executions and other brutal punishments.

A 17-year-old girl who escaped Boko Haram after being abducted and held in captivity for four years described life in the Sambisa forest: “[My] wicked ‘husband’ always beat me... My daily activities included praying, cooking if there was food, [and] going for Quranic lessons. No movement was allowed, and no visiting friends. It was a terrible experience, and I witnessed different punishments, from shooting to stoning to lashing.”



She, and most other former child “wives” interviewed — including some who returned with children born during captivity — had received little or no assistance in returning to school, starting livelihoods, or accessing psychosocial support.

Here is one Priest who witnessed firsthand the terrible crimes.

My parishioners shot dead in cold blood': Priests & lay faithful describe attacks in Nigeria.



Oh, what sorrow to have watched three of my parishioners shot dead in cold blood, right before my eyes — and I couldn't do anything," Nigerian parish priest Father Bako Francis Awesuh, 37, shared in a new *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN) report published recently.

"I couldn't pray because of the shock I was in. Whenever I opened my mouth to pray, words failed me. All I could say was 'Lord, have mercy.'"

ACN's report, titled "*Nigeria: A Bleeding Wound*," shares some of the

firsthand testimonies of Catholic faithful who have survived torture, kidnappings, and massacres at the hands of Nigerian terrorists.

In May 2021, Fr. Awesuh and 10 of his parishioners were kidnapped from St. John Paul II Parish in Nigeria's Kaduna state by radical Islamic Fulani attackers.

Awesuh was alone in his room at 11 p.m. when he heard gunshots. Terrified, he turned out the lights and waited.

"I stood there confused, not knowing what to do, as I felt completely lost. There was a knock on the door. My legs went cold and my body stiff. I was sweating profusely," Awesuh said. "They broke down the door and forced themselves inside. One of the men pushed me to the floor, tied me up, and flogged me mercilessly."

Awesuh and his parishioners were marched barefoot through the wilderness for three days. They were then held captive in harsh conditions for more than a month until a large ransom could be paid.

Eventually, Awesuh and his parishioners were ransomed, but not before three parishioners were shot dead during a rescue attempt. "I narrowly escaped death," Awesuh said. Yet, he said, there are many priests there who have not been as fortunate.

"I know of so many priests kidnapped before and after me who were killed even after a ransom was paid," Awesuh said.

In 2022 alone more than 5,000 Christians were killed in Nigeria, according to religious freedom watchdog *Open Doors International*.

As a Catholic priest in Nigeria, Awesuh faces some of the highest risks of kidnapping, torture, and murder of any person in the world. "Kidnappings are a hallmark of terrorist organizations in Nigeria ... and clergy are increasingly being targeted," the new ACN report said.

With over 30 million faithful, Catholics make up a large minority in Nigeria, accounting for approximately 14.82% of the country's population.

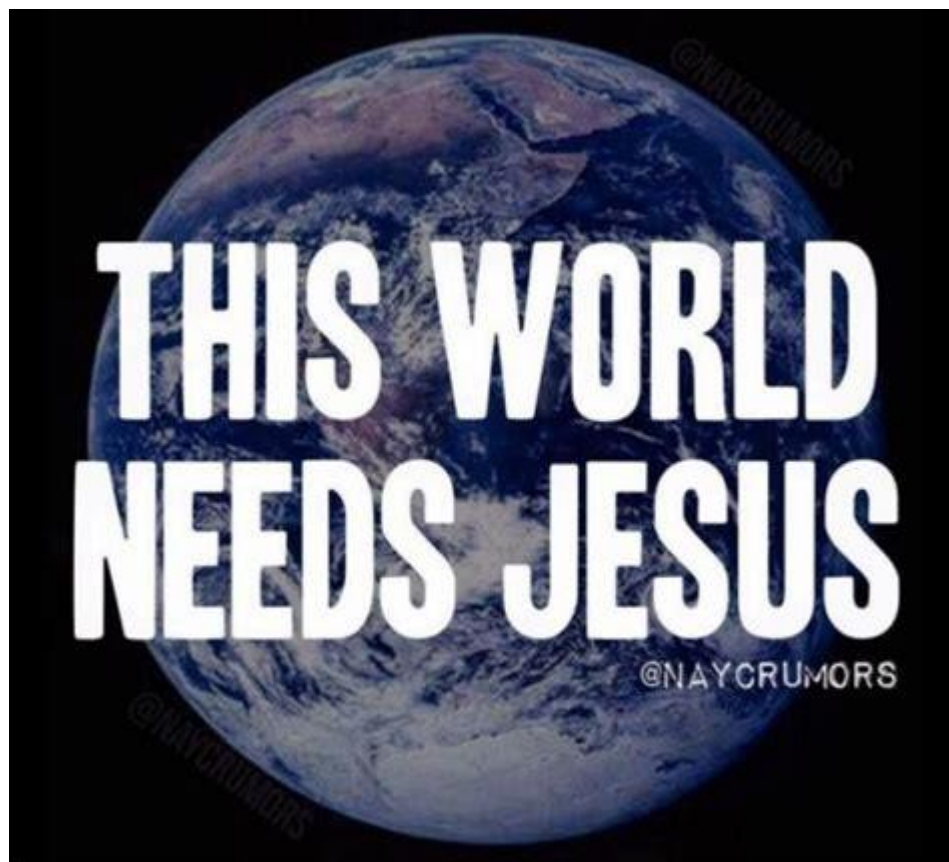
Yet, violent persecution in Nigeria has become a growing concern in recent years, according to many religious freedom organizations, including ACN.

Both priests and lay faithful are regularly targeted by Islamic terror groups such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and militant Fulani.

PLEASE PRAY FOR GOD TO COME TO THE AIDE OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN NIGERIA AND THROUGHOUT AFRICA WHERE TERRORIST GROUPS ARE RAPING, KILLING AND TORTURING ITS CITIZENS.



Satan's helpers must be stopped. The Rosary is a weapon that Satan and his helpers hate. Pray, Pray, Pray.



The International Catholic Family Newsletter

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Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio

St. Paul Ministry

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>