food for thought

The missionary does not go to other people as someone superior, as someone who can do things for them, as someone who knows their needs and problems and has all the answers to their questions and desires. (S)he goes as someone who loves people, and wants to be of service.

Brian O’Toole CSSp

Missionaries are not saints. They are human beings, with flaws, who are struggling sometimes to perform saintly acts. They annoy, they agitate, they push boundaries and they don’t like resting on their laurels.

Joe Humphrey, God’s Entrepreneurs

Once upon a time the father of a poor family had saved up enough to buy a piece of land of their own. He walked their new property and noticed something sticking out of a bush. He bent and scratched at the clay and soon dug up a body and a crucifix. The hands and arms were missing, the feet and legs too. He picked it up, carried it back to the house and laid it on their kitchen table. He told his family where he had found it.

What should they do? Take it to the church and give it to the priest? Bury it again?

Finally the youngest spoke: “Why don’t we hang it on the kitchen wall and put a sign underneath it?”

“What sign?” asked the father.

And the youngest told them. There was a long silence.

Then they hung the torso with care on the whitewashed wall of the kitchen and tacked a small piece of paper underneath. It read: “Jesus has no arms or legs. Will you lend him yours?”

The missionary serves real needs and must spend time with people, listening to them, sharing their life and their situation, entering into their mentality, traditions, ways of living, thinking and acting.

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