

Easter Message 2017

I like this story based on the book, 'The Eagle Has Landed', by Jack Higgins. Set during the Second World War, Hitler proposed the idea of capturing British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Lieutenant Colonel Kurt Steiner was forced to accept the mission. Steiner and his men were relocated to an airfield on the north-western coast of Holland, where they were to familiarize themselves with the British weapons and equipment. The team would be air dropped into Norfolk. The commandos outfitted themselves as Polish troops. Their plan was to infiltrate the village, Studley Constable, complete their mission, and make their escape.

At first, the plan went off without a hitch. Then, one day one of Steiner's men saw two local children fall into a water wheel. His first instinct was to jump into the river to rescue them. However, he knew that his action would reveal who they were and that would defeat their mission. Any attempt to rescue them was risking his life and the life of his fellow soldiers.

The sight of the children being drawn into the water wheel could not hold him back. He jumped into the water and rescued them. During the rescue operation he was killed and his German uniform, worn under the Polish uniform, was seen by the local people. That revealed the identity of Steiner and his men. All of them were shot dead in the encounter that followed. The German soldier risked his life in order to give life to two of the local children.

In today's world, Christians can no longer be seen to just fit into the world around us as if we are no different to anyone else. For sure, we are as human as any person and therefore we make as many mistakes, and we sin as much as anyone else does. But our claim on the risen Christ makes our mistakes and sinfulness more accountable to our world because we say we want to rely on Christ, our hope in darkness. To be a Christian today demands that we really make our lives not only lived with the cross, but with the risen Christ as our hope.

Now, more than ever, the Easter message needs to be lived in our world with more than an 'Alleluia'. We must live lives that show a '**radical commitment to the Risen Christ**'. We need to ensure we are dying to self and really rising to live **for** others. We are called to live with hope so that even in the worst darkness, we are people of hope. We can encourage each other by gathering and asking how can we really be like Christ in our world?

If our Lenten journey was a time for a radical look at our lives, then now is the time to really live it. I wish you a Happy Easter with all the new life we have in the tough decisions we make to enable Christ to live each day.

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