

FR. GEORGE'S MESSAGE FOR SEPTEMBER 1ST – BEGINNING OF THE NEW ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

“O Lord, You are my God, I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1)

As we begin afresh in our new Ecclesiastical Year, I rejoice that God has blessed each of us along with our beloved parish of St. Christopher with an abundance of life and His countless gifts. Recently, we initiated our mutual efforts to develop and increase our daily personal relationships with our Lord.

When I consider Christ Jesus, I like to think of His Heavenly Kingdom. In describing the Kingdom that God has prepared for us, our Lord offered us a description of who He would welcome into it by His words in Matthew 25:35-36, 45: ³⁵*for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me,* ³⁶*I was naked and you gave Me clothing, I was sick and you took care of Me, I was in prison and you visited Me...* ⁴⁵ *Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me.’”*

To “jolt” us into considering the unlimited opportunities we have been given by our Lord Jesus Christ in serving *the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, and those in prison*, I would like you to consider how all of these needy sons and daughters of God are easily visible in what we call “third world” countries. Indeed, if we could pause and consider life from *their* perspective in this new year that the Lord has given to each of us to serve Him and His creation, imagine how differently we might discern new and creative ways to assist not only the pain and suffering of those in *third world* countries, but likewise, we possibly could use our unique perspectives gained from this reflection to respond to our personal and collective challenges within our homes, our workplaces, our parish, and our local, state, and federal settings.

Toward this aim, I implore you to consider nine (9) steps to identifying with the poor in *third world* countries. If you are willing, put yourself in their role – you are still a son or daughter of God, but one blessed differently than you are right now...

First, take out the furniture of your home; leave only a few old blankets, a kitchen table, maybe a wooden chair. You've never had a bed, remember?

Second, throw out your clothes. Each person in the family may keep the oldest suit or dress, and a shirt or blouse. The head of the family has the only pair of shoes.

Third, remember all kitchen appliances have vanished. Keep a box of matches, a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt, a handful of onions, and a dish of dried beans. Rescue the moldy potatoes from the garbage can; those are tonight's meal.

Fourth, dismantle your bathrooms, shut off all running water, take out the wiring and the lights and everything that runs by electricity in your homes, cars, computers, smartphones, and all your mechanical devices.

Fifth, move out of your house or apartment and re-locate the family into the tool shed or a similar structure.

Sixth, expect no more postmen, firemen, or any government services. The two-classroom school is three miles away, but only two of your seven children can attend anyway, and they walk to school.

Seventh, throw out your bankbooks, stock certificates, pension plans, and insurance policies. You now have a cash hoard of \$5.

Eighth, get out and start cultivating your three acres of land. Try hard to raise \$300 in cash crops, because your landlord wants one third and your moneylender 10 percent.

Ninth, find some way for your children to bring in a little extra money so you have something to eat most days. But it won't be enough to keep bodies healthy – so lop off 25 to 30 years of your life and the life of each of your family members.

Now, let us give thanks to our Lord for this new ecclesiastical year, and in our personal relationship with Him each day, let us seek the means to do His will in all things... Amen!