

Europe from Evangelizer to Evangelized



Europe

This continent is the cradle of our Western Christian culture. In it one finds the majority of the developed countries in the Western World. It's composed of 43 countries, plus seven that can be included though they are not 100% within the borders (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkey) and has an area of 10, 349,915 square kilometers, a population of 750,000,000, a life expectancy of 73 years and 225 different languages.

Nowadays Europe has continued to lose her identity through the loss of her culture and her Faith. Without children, it's the continent with the largest population of elderly people and it has lost the vitality of years past. Although her economic status might be fine, her future is not so sure in these times with the crisis that involves various countries who are members of the European community.

The Catholic Faith in Europe

The Catholic Faith in Europe has its roots in antiquity, beginning with the arrival of the apostles themselves: Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and Saint James. Then, it was from Europe that the Faith radiated to all the corners of the world, thanks to the missionary force of the Church and the Catholic kings of the time.

Today the Church has shrunk by a drastic percentage in the number of her children. The Protestant Reformation, liberalism, secularism, and militant atheism, in addition to the apathy of her children, not living in accord with the Gospel, who have abandoned the family, children and their Christian

education, have all contributed to there being a mere 40% of Europeans who profess the Catholic Faith.

Nevertheless, the Church continues to send missionaries into Europe and maintain approximately 15,000 works of mercy throughout the whole continent.

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Europe suffers in the Faith because of a lack of vocations. There are many dioceses that have a enormous need for priests, including some where the remaining priests have to tend to over thirty parishes each. The average age of priests in Europe is 70 years old. Marriage has continued to deteriorate and now there are hardly any couples who even get married. Very few have children and even fewer baptize them.

The young people live alienated from God in a hedonistic society, where greed and pleasure rule. The seminaries are almost empty. It is urgent that continent receives in return what it gave from the beginning with such generosity: holy missionary vocations.

France

France is the Eldest Daughter of the Church, her beloved offspring, great in her saints and in her love and devotion to the Mother of God. At least that's what she was called for so many centuries of the Frankish nation.

Today France includes 65.9 million inhabitants of whom 51% call themselves Catholic. This is an incredibly high number when compared to the fact that religious practice is less than 5%. Furthermore, 31% declare no religion at all. There are some dioceses in which one priest must take care of thirty parishes.

Certainly these are alarming statistics. And we should not remain indifferent for these are souls

redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ spilled on the Cross. These are souls called to salvation. How can we stand aside knowing that there are so many who are lost because there are not priests to help them to arrive at their eternity with God? How can we live knowing that God might be calling me to His service, the most important, and I am turning a deaf ear to Him?

This crude reality has been seen by the Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon: France needs missionaries who love souls and seek the glory of God. France is known for her beautiful churches, for her thousand-year-old culture, for her artists, but above all for her saints. France has given great saints to the Church and we entrust the working of restoring the Faith of the children of this noble nation to intercession of these witnesses of Christ.

Therefore, you should think seriously if God is calling you to be a Missionary priest, to cast into the deep, into the sea inside without looking back. Following in the footsteps of so many, like Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Jean-Pierre Néel, Saint Isaac Jogues, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, to name just a few of the holy priests and missionaries that gave their life to the service of Christ and His Church.

We must not fear to say yes to God.

The website of the Diocese of Fréjus-Toulon: **www.diocese-frejus-toulon.com**

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