

The Most Urgent Task of our Era

Imagine yourself at Mass this weekend. Things are progressing as normal until, suddenly, after the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor looks up at the congregation and says, “If you don’t mind, I’d like to ask everyone two questions today. First, can I see a quick show of hands as to how many of us have been *overwhelmed* by the gospel?” How many hands do you think would go up? But then the pastor continues, “OK, thank you everyone. I’d like to ask a further question, if that’s alright. Can I see a show of hands for how many of us here this morning have made a decision to entrust *everything* we have - our time, our bodies, our money, our talents - to the Lord Jesus in faith?”

Would twenty hands go up? Ten? Five?

Yet, Pope John Paul II wrote that the initial ardent proclamation of the gospel is supposed to do exactly these things: overwhelm us and move us to surrender ourselves to Jesus in faith (cf. *Catechesi tradendae*, 25).

Where’s the disconnect? We, in ACTS XXIX, think the challenge is simply this: most people have never *heard* the gospel. And we think this is true not only for the fallen aways and the increasing number of people who identify as “nones,” but for those who regularly come to Mass. Oh, to be sure, we have heard parts of the gospel message, but when was the last time you heard a compelling, attractive proclamation at Mass, where people left Church with a newfound hope that can only spring from the truth of what God has done for us all in His Son?

In this era in which God has chosen for us to live, we think and believe that the most urgent task in the Church is just such a proclamation. With that in mind we created *The Rescue Project*.

St. Paul says that the gospel is power (cf. Rom 1:16.) In other words, the message is not just news, let alone ordinary news. It is, instead, explosive, life-changing, life-saving news; for it is the news that you and I are so loved by the Creator of a universe that is 90+ billion light years across that He created us in his own image and likeness for friendship with Himself and with others. And even after we had been deceived by the ancient foe into selling ourselves into slavery to powers we can’t compete against, He became one of us, to show us the depths of His love, to atone for our sins, and to go to war to rescue us from that ancient foe and his death grip. Note well, please, that it is this *message* that is power, not the messenger — what an encouraging truth for us who are all too often tempted to think we won’t be effective speakers.

The Rescue Project is a series of nine videos intended to be run in a small group context over an eight week period. They might be watched in a parish, homes, work places, universities, restaurants, prisons — anywhere, in fact. They’re intended for anyone and everyone — those in the pews and those for whom Jesus is merely a figure in ancient history. The goals of *The Rescue Project* are three: 1) that a person might be overwhelmed by the gospel, 2) moved to surrender his or her life to Jesus in faith, and, 3) be mobilized for mission so as to continue the work Jesus began on Easter Sunday and which, one day, He will bring to a glorious conclusion..

By God's grace this initiative is becoming a global movement, and we in ACTS XXIX are both humbled and honored to do our part to help rescue people from the increasing anger, division, and despair that are rampant in our culture. Hope is here!

The Rescue Project is available entirely for free at www.rescueproject.us. In addition to the videos, all of the resources necessary, including training videos on how to most effectively run it, participant and leader guides, branding logos, and more, are available. Please prayerfully consider whom the Lord is inviting *you* to reach out to and start a *Rescue Project* small group, so that more and more people will be liberated from the nightmare that is life apart from God and come to know their identity and mission.