

Tom Edwards Evangelistic Assoc., Inc.

A Ministry of lay Catholic Evangelization

That the World May Believe

*44 Years of
full-time lay
Catholic Evangelization
& Mission*

Scandal! This is the word that Pope Francis has used constantly in describing the fractured state of Christianity. In his message to his general audience on Jan. 22, 2014 in St. Peter's Square the Holy Father said: *"The divisions that exist among Christians are a source of pain and scandal, and damage the credibility and work of spreading the Gospel, Christ's name creates communion and unity, not division.*

He came to create communion among us, not to divide us! As St. Paul reproached the Corinthians for their divisions and rivalries, he asked them, "Is Christ divided?"

Christ has certainly not been divided. But we have to recognize with sincerity and with sorrow that our communities continue to live divisions that are a scandal. Divisions among Christians are a scandal. There is no other word for it. A scandal!"

On another occasion while addressing the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Francis said, "----we cannot claim that our division is anything less than a scandal and an obstacle to our proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the world." The Pope has spoken similarly regarding the many divisions that have flowed from the split called the East-West Schism in 1054 that resulted in the break of communion between what are now the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, a break which exist until today.

The splintering of the church was greatly compounded when Martin Luther sent his Ninety-five Theses (titled Disputation on the Efficacy and Power of Indulgences) as an appendix to a letter to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz. The letter was sent on October 11,

1512. Luther sent his theses to a few colleagues and most likely posted them on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. His purpose was to initiate an academic discussion on questions regarding the theory and practice of indulgences. The reaction that followed was sensationally negative and mushroomed into a theological firestorm regarding indulgences and other issues that culminated with Luther's excommunication on Jan. 3, 1521.

He came to create communion among us, not to divide us!"

We have just commemorated the 500th Anniversary of the events of the Protestant Reformation that resulted from the theologian Martin Luther and the publishing of his Ninety-five Theses. Following fifty years of dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans, it seems that genuine understanding and progress toward unity is being made. A giant step was made with the release of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. This document was an agreement between The Lutheran World Federation and The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Many other Protestant churches subsequently adopted the declaration. At last, after 500 years of conflict and even war, the question of "How does one go to heaven?" was agreed upon.

Now further progress is promoted with the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity releasing the document *From Conflict to Communion*. The document is birthed out of an attitude that was ignored for hundreds of years----that being: *We will direct our critical glance first at ourselves and not each other. We will look back on events that occurred 500 Christ at the center. The gospel should be*

The Proclaimer

Feb./March

2018

celebrated and communicated to the people of our time so that the world may believe that God gives Himself to human beings and calls us into communion with Himself and His church. Herein lies the basis for our joy in our common faith. Lutheran and Catholics have come to acknowledge that more unites than divides them.

It would be well worth the small effort to read the above mentioned documents if one has not done so. Both are easily available on-line. The joint study reveals a factual history regarding Martin Luther and his work. Pope John Paul affirmed that Martin Luther's intention was to reform, not to divide. Pope Benedict also recognized the ways in which the person and theology of Martin Luther pose a spiritual and theological challenge to Catholic theology today.

Aside from ecumenical dialogue and documents composed in high places, let us remember that perhaps the greater work in bringing unity amongst believers exist at the root level---that is with each and every believer---with you and me. The scripture mandates our mindset:

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward (Luke 9:38-41).

The disciples saw a man working a miracle in the name of Jesus. The problem---he didn't go to school with the other disciples, he wasn't of their company. Therefore, "Let's stop him, condemn him". Jesus would have none of it. Anyone doing even the smallest

thing though faith in Jesus is a friend of Jesus. Lesson: ***probably better to seek unity than division even if I don't fully understand the one who doesn't conform to my standards.***

Did you ever wonder why the world seems so strong and we the church seem so weak? Why can't the world see that we are followers of the living God, the Almighty creator of the universe? The truth is that there is only one thing that will convince others that we are true disciples. Jesus put it this way on the eve of his crucifixion--- *"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35)."* The test of course is loving those who are different, those who may seem unlovely. And if we truly love we will desire unity with them.

Jesus said, *"Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and no town or house divided against itself will stand.(Matt. 12:25^b)"*. It is essential then that the church ultimately be established in unity. Jesus prayed to His Father for this: *"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me (John 17:20-21)."* It is inconceivable that the Father would not answer the prayer of His Son. Jesus prayed that all of His followers will be one. That may be the greatest miracle of all time (aside from the resurrection). But, it will come to pass. The question one must pose to self: Am I willing to be part of the answer---will I strive to move from conflict to communication---and ultimately to real communion with all of those who have made Jesus their Lord?

It is inconceivable that the Father would not answer the prayer of His Son.

Wedding Bells

We are happy to announce that Tom and Jean Marie were joined together in Holy Matrimony on January 6, 2018 at St. Patrick's Parish in Carlsbad, CA. Fr. Tom Burdick presiding.

We ask your prayers as we begin this new season of life.



Schedule a Parish Mission, Retreat, or Conference

with

Tom and Jean Marie Edwards

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Tom Edwards—lay Catholic Evangelist and Missioner

Tom Edwards makes his home in St. Augustine, Florida, USA. Tom has two adult children---a son and a daughter, both married, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. After a marriage of 50 years, Tom's wife Pam passed away. Tom is now remarried to Jean Marie. Tom was baptized and raised a Roman Catholic. In 1974, after working several years in retail, Tom resigned from his management position to answer a call to full-time ministry. This step soon evolved into an international mobile outreach of lay Catholic evangelization with an emphasis on the preaching and teaching of the Holy Scriptures. His conference speaking, retreats, and the presentation of parish missions has been widely received throughout the United States, Belize, Brazil, Bahamas, England, Wales, Canada, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Kazakhstan, Jamaica, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa and Asian countries. Tom's goal always is to allow the living Word of God to become applicable to one's life today. Tom began networking with Renewal Ministries of Ann Arbor, MI in 1995 as a Country Coordinator. He organizes and leads mission teams to several countries each year.

For references from bishops and many priests visit the web page for Tom Edwards Evangelistic Assoc., Inc: www.catholic evangelization.homestead.com



Jean Marie Edwards

Raised in a large Irish Roman Catholic family, Jean Marie's first husband, Bud, passed away in the year 2000. She is mother to four married adult children (a daughter and three sons) and grandmother to eleven. Now married to Tom Edwards she continues to be actively involved in the evangelization and missionary work.

Jean Marie has spearheaded pro-life efforts in the United States as well as African and Eastern European countries. She has a long time passion for saving the lives of babies in the womb. Her work with a team from Operation Rescue led to over 100 babies being saved from the abortion mills in California. In the course of this ministry she suffered intense persecution and humiliation. Her faith and reliance upon the grace of God through many storms prepared her for far reaching efforts all while working 30 years as a school teacher in California. She was instrumental in carrying out a diocesan based jail ministry to male and female prisoners. For fourteen years she carried the love and the Word of God to the incarcerated.



TANZANIA—Diocese of Shinyanga—Renewal Ministries Mission, July, 2017. Priests retreat—After this three day retreat the priests attended the FIRE RALLY to hear confessions and to walk through the multitudes of people gathered to lay hands upon their flock and pray a blessing upon them.



Jean Marie presents Bishop Liberatus Sangu with the fetal models used in the pro-life workshops. He took them in hand and was amazed at their life like appearance and feel. The Bishop blessed the fetal models and that blessing seemed to carry over into the pro-life workshops which were well attended by both men and women—all receiving the teaching with great zeal.

Help to reach many others. You can support this ministry instantly with your own credit/debit card through the PayPal Button. Print immediate receipt for your tax deductible gift.



Thank you

As you can see. our upcoming itinerary is a demanding one. It's because of those just like you that this full-time work continues onward in the sharing of the gospel. The Lord uses people to keep us going.

Please continue to hold us in prayer. Your financial contributions are much appreciated. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Properly itemized donations remain deductible under the new tax law.

Your generosity is much appreciated.

ITINERARY

Prayer Group--Praise-Prayer-Sharing-Bible Teaching-Fellowship. Each Monday evening, 7:00 PM--St. Augustine House of Prayer--30 Ocean Ave. (Across from the Nombre de Dios Mission grounds).

March 3-7 —**Lenten Parish Mission**, Greenville, MS--St. Joseph Catholic Church

April 6-8—**Renewal Ministries Gathering**, Ann Arbor, MI

April 11-25—**Slovakia and Romania Mission**—Various Venues.

May 16-31——**Mission to Asian Country**

June 13-19——**Presov Slovakia**

July 4-17——**Tanzania—Mtwara Diocese**

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