

Chaplain's Bulletin March 31, 2024



Dear Folks,

Happy Easter! We celebrate the great victory that knows no defeat. Time to party according to our ability.

Then what?

Then we live the Gospel boldly like a people who have a gift greater than the world.

I saw the “Cabrini” movie. It was wonderful. Frances Xavier Cabrini came to the U.S. from Italy in 1889, and at that time it was not easy to be Italian and Catholic in the United States. The obstacles she faced were amazing, but she was even more amazing. She said, “We are bold, or we die. That's how I learned to live in America.” An Easter people is not timid.

The movie made some important points:

- The Catholic Church has produced some powerful women, and Mother Cabrini was by no means the first. Power does not always come from official authority.
- See the harm that has been done by racism, prejudice, and hostility to people we would rather not have to see. It is easy to see that in others, but the big challenge is seeing it in ourselves.
- Doing good is harder than we think.
- The power of story telling.
- Choice between preserving the institution and serving the mission which is the reason for the institution in the first place.
- Sometimes not getting what we want is exactly what we need.

Some have criticized the movie for not portraying her spirituality. She is not shown talking about Jesus, and we only see her pray before meals. I'm told that C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien disagreed about how explicit to make their faith in their stories. Compare “Chronicles of Narnia” with “Lord of the Rings” and see the difference. Perhaps by being more subtle, more people will be drawn to it, and when they are interested in the story, we can share the other dimensions (you didn't expect the movie to do all the work, did you?). If we are going to fulfil Jesus' mandate to “make disciples of all nations” we must get better at sharing the Gospel story, and the lives of the saints can be a potent way to begin. They can show what happens when Jesus is at work in people's lives.

During the Easter season, we shall read a good deal of Acts of the Apostles. I challenge you to look especially on how the early Christians told their stories. The story of Jesus is not only the greatest story ever told, but the greatest story that could ever be told. Why would we be timid about it?

Blessings, Fr. Jim