

my own. Yet, at the same time, it is a 'yes' that - as it continues to unfold, sometimes despite me, rather than because of me - leaves me counting the sands on the shores of the sea or the stars in the heavens.

And in that, it is not at all unlike - in fact, it is totally like - all the 'yeses' that you all have said to God and others in your lives: 'yes' to a spouse, 'yes' to parenthood, 'yes' to being a disciple of Jesus Christ, 'yes' to being in community with my brothers and sisters in the Church, 'yes' to being a teacher, 'yes' to serving as a firefighter. When we are graced to live in "obedience" to those 'yeses' (some even from very long ago), we allow God to send us on adventures we never could have imagined - and quite frankly, at times, never would have wanted or chosen - only to discover a faith, hope, love, and joy that we never could have imagined either.

The amazing gift of being sent is part of the mystery that we celebrate in this Easter Season, in these days leading up the great Feast of Pentecost when Jesus breathes anew his Spirit upon us and sends us forth.

Inertia can build up in all of our lives. We can become quite complacent and at home with the way we are living

out our discipleship, with the way our marriages are, with the quality of family life, with the work we are doing, with the state of our friendships, etc. And so, we pray together these days for the grace of being sent - the grace of overcoming whatever inertia into which we may have settled in our lives to go forth glorifying the Lord with our lives and announcing the Good News of the Gospel. It is in being sent, and only in being sent, that we can continue to grow each day in faith, hope, and love.

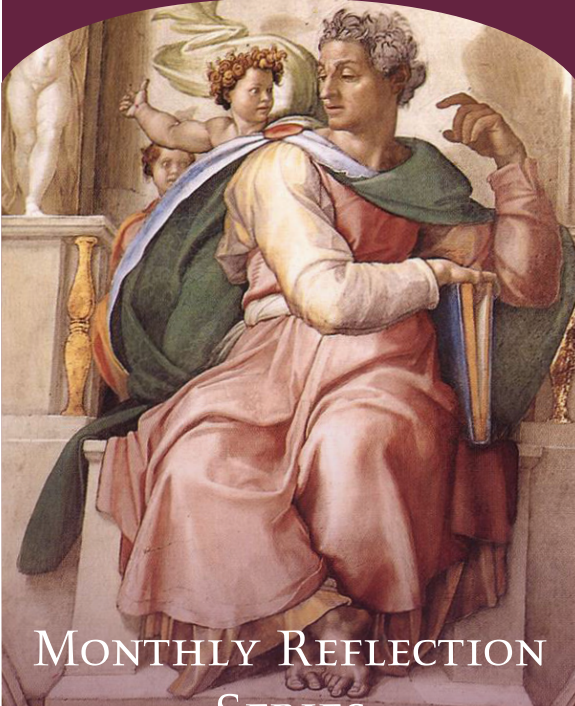
All that said, it is rarely easy to be sent. I know for me, I was sad to leave the Tri-Community in Colorado Springs, and I miss the people there greatly. Yet, I am also glad and grateful to have been sent here to the International House of Formation in Chile ... sent by my religious superiors, sent by my community, sent by God ... to let God continue to unfold my very feeble, weak, yet heartfelt 'yes.' I know and trust that somewhere in that mysterious unfolding lies the fullness of joy, the abundant life, and the salvation that Jesus promised us ... because my 'yes' - and all of our 'yeses' in God - actually do not originate in us, but in the God who first loved me and you.

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A publication of the Congregation of Holy Cross,  
United States Province of Priests and Brothers  
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APRIL 2016



MONTHLY REFLECTION  
SERIES

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# Here I am, Send Me

by Rev. Drew Gawrych, C.S.C.

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*Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

-- John 20:21-22

I immediately recognized the phone number on my caller ID. It was the Provincial Office in South Bend. However much they might want to, Provincial Superiors do not tend to make many casual calls simply to inquire about the weather or how your day is going. I knew something was up.

And something was up, something I had not expected or foreseen at all: Fr. Tom O’Hara, C.S.C. had called to tell me that he and his council had chosen me as their first choice to serve as the Director of the International House of Formation in Santiago, Chile.

When Fr. Tom asked me what my initial reaction was, I responded honestly: “First, I am in shock. I am not really sure what I think or feel at the moment. Second, I am overwhelmed. I have never done formation work or been a superior in my own language and culture, let alone another. And so, it strikes me as a little bit crazy ... but if you are asking, I am listening.”

We talked a little bit more, and then Fr. Tom asked me to take a few days to pray and think about it. As both my head and my heart were spinning, I also got Fr. Tom’s permission to speak with Fr. Ken Molinaro, C.S.C., the Novice Master at our Novitiate in Cascade, Colorado, a holy man who has become a close brother and mentor of mine.

I went to Fr. Ken that same afternoon. I told him about the phone call and what the Provincial had said. I also told him that as crazy as the assignment seemed to be, I had a deeper feeling that this was of God and that it was a call to which I needed to say “yes.”



Fr. Ken’s wise, sage response was exactly what I needed to hear. To paraphrase: “Drew, there is no ‘yes’ to be said. You gave your ‘yes’ eight years

ago when you professed religious vows forever in the Congregation of Holy Cross. This is not about a call that you have to say ‘yes’ to. This about God sending you - within that ‘yes’ you have already given, within that call you have already answered.”

The moment Fr. Ken said those words, they pierced me to the heart, and so I knew they were the words of God for me. I did the “due diligence” in discernment that Fr. Tom had asked of me - I met with my spiritual director; I spoke to the outgoing director of the house of formation, Bishop Jorge Izaguirre; I also had a phone call with the Superior of the District of Chile; and I spent many hours in prayer - and yet I already knew what the answer was.

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“ **Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.**

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When Fr. Tom and I spoke a week later and he asked me for my response, I purposefully and poignantly did not say “yes.” Instead, I said, “If you and your council want to send me to be the Director of the International House of Formation in Chile, here I am, send me.”

Those words of Fr. Ken have remained that fount of grace throughout my whole transition, including my last months in the parish community in Colorado Springs and in my first months here at the International House of Formation. I believe that Fr. Ken’s words were such a well-spring of grace for me, because they helped remind me that my life is not about me, and thus even this new assignment is not about me. It is not about my ‘yes’ - or my ‘no’ - but it is about God ... and God being able to send me through the ‘yes’ I have already given on an adventure, a mission not only to new corners of the world, but also to new corners of my heart and life!

My new assignment is simply - yet profoundly - the unfolding of the ‘yes’ I gave to God years ago. As with Mary and all other disciples of all times and ages, it is a ‘yes’ that has unfolded in ways that I never expected—and at times would have never chosen on