

# Brother Iggy: a man whose faith got under his skin

By Father Paul J. Cuddy  
Catholic Courier columnist

It is regrettable that many of our people have a kind of casual faith which seems not to go beneath the skin. When I talked with 25 young Catholics preparing for confirmation, I remarked: "A couple of years ago, a family from Laos who lived up the street from our Webster rectory won \$10 million in the New York State lottery. What would you do if you won \$10 million?" I went around the room to each candidate and was dismayed that only two of the 25 thought of sharing it with anyone else, even with their families. They listed travel and trips, nice clothes, a heavy metal rock'n' roll band, skiing trips. The two exceptions: one would get a big house for his family; the other would give \$3 million to the poor. All others centered in self.

Just think what \$10 million would do to expand the missions' medical and catechetical facilities; to train seminarians for the priesthood, and sisters to teach, to nurse, to do social work; to expand the training of the laity for the service of the people. The Third World does not lack vocations, but it does lack the means to accept all the applicants. How different from the States!

Brother Ignatius DiSanto, S.V.D., is a native of Clyde. He has been in the missions in New Guinea for many years. He sent a letter indicating that religion is not just penetrating to his skin, but into his whole being. I had sent him a check for his birthday, Jan. 22, saying: "I hope your Superior will let you use it as you wish." He still regards the old vows of poverty and obedience. He wrote:

"Today is my 88th birthday, and I thank

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you for your gift. Yes, my Superior gave me permission to use the money you sent me. I used it to buy a freezer cabinet. I got one almost as large as the original one I had. That was ordered 15 years ago. This is larger than I had hoped to get, and I have had it only four days, but it has already a week's supply of ice cream in it. That makes it easier for Sister cook and also helps to keep others a little more happy, and it surely makes my work easier. That is especially needed in my 88 years."

**Comment:** Note that Brother Iggy's concern was not to sate his senses or his comfort, but to make others happier, and to serve others. I used to meet Society of Divine Word Fathers when they were at Conesus, and ask: "Do you know Brother Ignatius DiSanto?" They would smile broadly and say: "Oh, Brother Iggy! He is the Ice Cream Brother and he was good to us."

Brother continued:

"Do you remember my sister in Seneca Falls, Mrs. Albert DiSanto? Albert died some 15 years ago. Aunt Staff (Stephanie) fell and broke a shoulder some years ago

and has been confined to her home ever since. On December 30th she entered North Brooks Heights Home for disabled persons in Auburn. Sometime would you go and see her and arrange for her to receive the Holy Sacraments? She is 92 years, last December 26 ..."

**Comment:** Note Brother Iggy's solicitude, not for himself but for others. I wrote him promptly: "Have no worry about Aunt Staff. Your nephew, Ralph DiSanto of Clyde, phoned me and asked me to go to see her, and so did her niece, Mrs. Vertibello of St. Alphonsus, Auburn. So I went over to see her and found her in the dining room, sitting contentedly. She is in quite good health excepting for walking, and she had a grand smile, and was wonderfully cheerful. I will give her special care as an act of thanksgiving to you who have served Our Lord and Our Lady and the Church for so many years. The Lord bless you. Please keep me in your good prayers."

To readers, do ponder over what you would do with \$10 million, examine your soul and see how deep the Faith is within you, even as indeed I examine myself.

# The Son of God rescues his followers from a storm

By Cindy Bassett  
Catholic Courier columnist

"Peter, go now and take everyone in your boat to the other side of the lake," Jesus told his companion.

"What about you, Lord?" Peter asked. "Where will you be?"

"I must send these people on their way before it gets too dark for them to travel," Jesus replied. "I'll meet you later in Bethsaida."

Peter and the other apostles watched from the boat as Jesus blessed the huge crowd and dismissed them. "These people will not give up so easily," Peter commented. "They are determined to make him their king."

"I still don't understand how Jesus fed over 5,000 people with only a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish," Philip said.

"Don't forget the 12 baskets of leftovers!" Andrew added. "No wonder they began clamoring to make Jesus a king."

It was nearly dark by the time the small fishing vessel reached the middle of the lake. "I heard someone in the crowd today calling Jesus a great prophet, like Moses," Peter said. "Jesus is much more than a prophet. After all, why else would we be willing to leave everything and follow him?"

"Jesus is a great miracle worker," James said. "The blind see; the lame walk. I even saw Jesus cast out demons from a man."

"Peter, do you remember the first time you met Jesus?" Andrew, his brother, asked. "You had been out fishing all night without a single fish to show for your efforts. Then Jesus came and told you to cast out one more time. The nets were almost torn by the size of your catch! I thought the boat might sink."

The others were still laughing over this event when Matthew said, "Jesus has the power to forgive sinners. Why else would he ask someone like me to be one of his followers? Only God can forgive sins."

Everyone was silent after Matthew's comment. As the boat sailed gently across the lake, they all started drifting off to sleep. But, a short time later, they were awakened by their boat being tossed vio-

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lently by high winds that had suddenly come up.

"Take down the sails!" Peter shouted. "We'll have to row the rest of the way to the other side."

Although several of the men took the oars, they made little progress against the gale winds. "Look over there!" James cried. "I can see a man walking on the water. It must be a ghost!"

"Maybe we are all going to die out here in the storm," Andrew said glumly.

"Do not be afraid," said a voice clearly heard by everyone in the boat. "It is I."

"That's Jesus speaking," Peter said. "I'd recognize his voice anywhere." He went over to the edge of the boat and called out, "Lord, if that really is you, command me to walk out on the water to you."

"Come, Peter." The same voice said.

As the others watched in amazement, Peter climbed out of the boat and began walking toward the man. The winds grew even stronger, and Peter looked down at the rough waves all around him.

"Save me, Lord, I'm drowning!" Peter cried as he started sinking into the deep water.

Jesus came and took Peter by the arm and together they got back into the boat. As soon as they had done so, the winds ceased and the lake became calm once again.

"Peter, why did you doubt me? So little faith after all that you have seen?" Jesus asked.

"I'm sorry, Lord. I'm just a simple-minded fisherman," Peter confessed. "But, you Jesus, are the Son of God!"

Peter fell down on his knees before Jesus with the other apostles just as the sun was coming up over the lake that morning. Together they worshipped the Son of God.

**Scripture reference:** Matthew 14:15-32; Mark 6:30-52; John 6:1-21.

**Meditation:** Jesus is the Son of God. He is with us always — especially during the storms of our lives. But we must listen for his voice.

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