Prayer
Reading: Matthew 19:16-30
Hymn: 539 "Ye Christian Heralds"

The spread and growth of the early church was phenomenal but we know the names of few missionaries. For us the missionaries remain anonymous and the details of the expansion are unknown. In the second century Irenaeus was the great missionary bishop in Gaul. In the fourth century during the Arian controversy Ulphila was the great Arian missionary to the Goths.

From the fourth century onward often the missionaries were monks. Amidst the ruins left by the barbarian invasions the monasteries became the main centers of learning in the West. The monasteries also were the training schools and bases for missionaries.

THE RISE OF MONASTICISM:

Some factors in the rise of monasticism:
1. A giving up on the world and a concentration on the saving of one's soul
2. The growth of the double standard--a high road and a low road
3. Laymen's revolt against a worldly clergy
4. The end of persecution and an outlet for excess zeal

Landmarks in the rise of monasticism:
1. The early hermits like Paul of Thebes
2. Anthony and the hermits
3. Pachomius and the cenobites (community monks)
4. The Rule of Basil: Basil of Caesarea formed a new rule to insure that monks were subject to bishops and that monks lived useful lives.
5. Extremists:
   Simon Stylites and the pole-sitters
   The Acoemetae (The sleepless ones)

MARTIN OF TOURS (316-397): Monk-and missionary in Gaul
Son of a pagan but became a catechumen while a boy.
Served in the Roman army in Gaul
His conversion: sharing his coat with a beggar and the vision of Christ
360 A. D. joins himself to Hilary of Poitiers. Ordained a priest.
372 A. D. was made bishop of Tours.
Martin became a monk and enlisted others--little huts and a common dining
Martin sets up chain of monasteries throughout Gaul which became mission training stations.
Martin worked to convert people of villages and countryside.

PATRICK: THE APOSTLE OF THE IRISH (389-461)
Decay of Roman Empire in Britain accompanied by rise of paganism.
Patrick came from a christian family: grandfather a presbyter and his father a deacon. Patrick not very religious as a youth.
Patrick was kidnapped by wild Irish raiders when he was sixteen and carried to Ireland where he became a swine herder for an Irish king.
For six years he served this king, turning to God and praying earnestly.
Partick's escape: dream that led him to coast. Fishermen took him to France and possibly Italy.
Patrick joyfully returned to his family.
Patrick's dream calling him to Ireland.
Patrick's training at Lerins and Auxerre.
Patrick takes up the work of an earlier missionary, Palladius.
Patrick baptized many, set up churches and monasteries.
The monasteries of Ireland became centers of learning and missionary work.
Patrick's Confession and his Letter to Coroticus
The Irish hyman called "Lorica" or "The Breastplate" or "The Deer's cry."

NINIAN: contemporary of Patrick who carried Gospel to Wales.

COLUMBA, MISSIONARY TO THE PICTS OF SCOTLAND (521-597)
One of the greatest of the Irish missionaries came from a noble family. Became a monk and studied in Irish monasteries; Finnian one of his teachers. Selected twelve disciples and established mission station on island of Iona which became base for converting Picts of Scotland. His monks were gentle, humble, owned nothing, lived chaste lives and made themselves useful to the people--taught them how to improve their lives. Self-supporting. Converted Brude, king of the Picts. Won the love of the people: his last day.

COLUMAN: IRISH MISSIONARY TO THE CONTINENT (543-615). May have been the greatest of the Irish missionaries. Scholar and missionary trained at Bangor, an Irish mission center noted for its scholarly pursuits and classical learning. 585 Columban chose twelve disciples and went on a mission to the continent to convert the pagan raiders who brought much suffering to his people. Driven out of France because he preached against the sins of the kings and people. Preached among the Alemanni and Lombards. Worked in Vosges, Burgundy, Switzerland and northern Italy. Established independent monasteries that became famous as centers of scholarly learning: Luzuell in the Vosges, St. Gall in Switzerland, and Bobbio in the northern Appenines--famous for its manuscripts.

BENEDICT OF NursIA (480-543)
Born to an affluent Roman family in village of Nursia in Umbria, about eight-five miles northeast of Rome. Educated at Rome where he became completely disillusioned with the licentiousness of the dissolute society. At twenty years of age (c. 500) he gave up on the world crumbling before the barbarians and became a hermit in a cave near Subiaco in the mountains about forty miles east of Rome. Spent three years in self-mortification and study of Scripture. His first disciples: the shepherds. Neighboring monks join him and choose him abbot. 529 Benedict fled to Monte Cassino eighty-five miles southeast of Rome. monks were going to poison him because of severity of his rule. Also had aroused hostility of clergy. At Monte Cassion built monastery from ruins of a fallen pagan temple. Monte Cassion became the mother monastery of the Benedictines.

The Rule of Benedict: moderation and good sense. A spiritual garrison: need for discipline Flexible rule to meet needs and yet cover every phase of life Year's novitiate before final vows. Poverty, chastity and obedience Abbot chosen by brethren and to consult with older brothers. Worship, study, and manual labor Eight hours of sleep Flexibility in service: cooks in kitchen, scholars in library, farmers in the field. Simple clothes but no scratchy underwear of spike beds. Food to meet health and conditions No self-torture Sobriety and seriousness. No idleness.