

Feast of Christ the King
November 19-20, 2011 - Cycle A

“Persuasive Happy Prince”

Once upon a time, a long time ago, when the leaves of the trees had fallen to the ground and there was a sense of chill in the air, the swallows of Salzburg decided it was time to head south across the mountains of Austria; across the Balkans'; past Greece, over the Mediterranean Sea and into sunny Egypt. Yes, that's where they were headed, to spend their winter in sunny, warm Egypt. And so all the beautiful swallows of Salzburg flocked together and headed south, all except one whose name was Hesi, because he was always so hesitant about everything, even flying south. Oh, Hesi wanted to chase butterflies and bugs, and make a splash in the pond and scare frogs. So he did. Even though there was a chill in the air, Hesi the swallow, did not leave Salzburg. Like his name, Hesi was hesitant. He kept chasing butterflies and bugs. He made a splash in the pond and scared the frogs. But one

day, at the end of November, it was cold. So the little swallow finally decided it was time to go. Time to fly south, to warm and sunny Egypt. There he would catch up with his family and friends and spend the winter with them.

Hesi flew for about six days. On the seventh day he decided that he must rest. He spotted a beautiful town beyond the mountains, sitting in a warm valley. There is where he would rest. And so he did. He flew right to the center of town. And there in the center of town was a strange statue. Oh, it was a beautiful statue but the little swallow knew nothing about the area, knew nothing about the town, and knew nothing about the statue. Yes, Hesi, the hesitant swallow, flew right up to the feet of the statue, found a cozy spot and immediately fell asleep.

But lo, and behold, the swallow woke up. It was raining. But he looked at the sky and there were no clouds. What was going on? Well the swallow was

hesitant to move from his cozy spot. So he stayed put and fell fast asleep, only to be awakened again. He looked up. The statue of the little prince was crying. "Crying?" he said to himself. The swallow flew up to the nose of the statue and perched there. The little swallow began to speak to the statue, "See here, you are not allowed to cry and shed tears. You are getting me all wet. And I don't like to be wet." Well, the statue of the little prince spoke, and the swallow was startled. The little prince said, "There are three things left undone that you must do for me." "Now see here Mr. Prince, or whoever you are, I'm on my way south to warm and sunny Egypt. And I need my rest." The statue began to speak again which surprised the swallow. "Take the sapphires that are my blue eyes and bring them over yonder to that poor grandmother who will not survive the winter, because she will freeze, and you will make her happy; and I will be happy," said the prince.

Now there was something irresistible about the manner and way the little prince said everything. So Hesi, the hesitant swallow, said, “Oh, alright, just this one time. Then I must sleep.” So the little swallow worked very hard and removed the two blue sapphires and flew them over yonder to the poor grandmother. Then the swallow flew back to the statue and said, “Okay, Mr. Prince, or whoever you are, the sapphires are delivered.” “Fine,” said the little prince, “now you must take the rubies from my belt and fly them over yonder to that poor student who will starve this winter without the help of my rubies. You will make him happy, and I will be happy.” Well, Hesi, the hesitant swallow, said, “Oh, alright. Just this one time, then I must sleep.” So the swallow worked very hard to remove the rubies from the belt, which he did. And he flew them over yonder to the poor student. And the swallow flew back to the statue. “Okay, Mr. Prince, or whoever

you are, the rubies are delivered. And say, what is your name?"

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asked the swallow. The statue spoke, "I am the Happy Prince, but I cannot be happy until you help me. There were three things left undone that must be done. Two tasks are accomplished, and now the third must be accomplished." The Happy Prince was even more persuasive than before. So, Hesi, the hesitant swallow, said, "Okay, if it will make you happy I'll do it. What do you want done?" The statue said, "You must peel off all the gold edging on my cape and bring it over yonder to that young mother so that she and her children will have clothes for the winter. That will make her very happy, and I will be happy." "Okay," said the little swallow, "but just this one favor and no more." So the swallow worked very hard to peel off the gold, and once it was rolled up into several beautiful gold nuggets, the swallow flew each nugget over to the young mother and her

children, (for her husband had died and she was all alone.) The swallow made his way back to the

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statue and reported that the mother received the gold.

The Prince was very happy that he had given away the most valuable things he had. “Now little swallow you may go. Three things undone are now done. And thank you. You made me very happy because you made others happy. Thank you little swallow. Enjoy the warm, sunny beautiful weather of Egypt.”

Then Hesi, the hesitant swallow, made a profound remark, “No, I cannot go to Egypt. My energy is gone. I have no strength and I am going to die. But for the first time in my hesitant life, I am happy that others are happy. I am happy that I helped the Happy Prince.” And the little swallow died at the foot of the Happy Prince, a Prince who had changed his life. And the little swallow was

happy forever, in another place, with the Eternal
Happy Prince. (Story adapted from Oscar Wilde.)

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So we pray: *Lord Jesus, You are the Prince of
all happiness. You are the inspiration that moves our
hearts to share Your love. Help us to help others
and we will be changed. Help us to do Your will
every day, all the time, until You call us home at
the hour of our death, for you live forever and ever.
Amen.*

Rev. A. J. Geraci
St. Paul Church
Yellow Springs, OH