



# MK Reach Telemachus

**“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” Philippians 1:21**

In the fourth century, there lived a monk named Telemachus who spent most of his life in a remote community of prayer, raising vegetables for the cloister kitchen. When he was not tending his garden spot, he was fulfilling his vocation of study and prayer.

One day, this monk felt that the Lord wanted him to go to Rome, the capital of the world. Telemachus had no idea why he should go there and was terrified as to the thought. But as he prayed, God’s directive became clear.

Obediently, he left his village in Asia Minor and traveled to Rome. He arrived during the holiday festival, and the city was bustling with excitement over the recent roman victory over the Goths. In the midst of this jubilant commotion, Telemachus looked for clues as to why God has brought him there, for he had no other guidance, not even a superior in a religious order to contact.

So Telemachus let the crowds guide him, and he was soon led into the Coliseum where the gladiator contests were to be staged. The monk could hear the cries of the animals in their cages beneath the floor of the great arena and the clamor of the contestants preparing to do battle. Then the gladiators marched into the arena, saluted the emperor and shouted, “We who are about to die salute thee!” Telemachus shuddered. He had never heard of the gladiator games before, but he had a premonition of awful violence.

The crowd had come to cheer men who, for no reason other than amusement, would murder each other. Human lives were offered for entertainment. As the monk watched these events unfold, he realized he could not sit still and watch such savagery. Neither could he leave and forget. He jumped to the top of the perimeter wall and cried, “in the name of Christ, forbear!”

The fighting began, and of course, NO one paid the slightest heed to him. So Telemachus went down the stone steps and leapt onto the sandy floor of the arena. One gladiator sent him sprawling with a blow from his shield directing him back to his seat. It was a rough gesture, though almost a kind one. The crowd roared.

But Telemachus refused to stop. He rushed into the way of those trying to fight, shouting again, “In the name of Christ, forbear!” the crowd began to laugh and cheer him on, perhaps thinking him part of the entertainment. Then his movement blocked the vision of one of the contestants. The gladiator raised his sword and with a flash of steel struck Telemachus slashing down across his chest and into his stomach. The little monk gasped one more, “in the name of Christ, forbear.”

Then a strange thing happened. As the two gladiators and the crowd focused on the fallen body of the monk, the arena. Spectators began to leave until the huge stadium was emptied.

There were other forces at work, of course, but that innocent figure lying in a pool of blood crystallized the opposition, and that was the last gladiatorial contest in the Roman Coliseum. Never again did men kill each other for the crowd’s entertainment in the Roman arena.”

Standing up for our faith can prove to be an effective witness to others and have tremendous results.

Additional scriptures:  
Matthew 10:16-18

Matthew 28:18-20

John 1 5:18-25

I Peter 2:20-25

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