

World Mission Sunday



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October 22, 2017

Prologue

The world mission Sunday 2013 took place in the context of the year of faith.

The World Mission Sunday 2015 takes place in the context of the Year of Consecrated Life.

The world mission Sunday 2016 took place in the context of the year of Mercy.

World Mission Sunday 2017, our annual worldwide Eucharistic celebration for the Missions and missionaries of the world, will be on October 22.

This year, we are reminded by Pope Francis that Mission is at the Heart of Christian Faith

Why World Mission Sunday

Today vast numbers of people still do not know Jesus Christ. For this reason, the mission ad gentes continues to be most urgent. All the members of the Church are called to participate in this mission, for the Church is missionary by her very nature: she was born “to go forth”.

World Mission Sunday is one of the most special days in the global Catholic Church. It unites Catholics all over the world in prayer, mutual friendship and support; both spiritual and material. It is a celebration of grace and joy.

So, the month of October, with the celebration of World Mission Sunday, offers diocesan and parish communities, Institutes of Consecrated Life, Ecclesial Movements, and the entire People of God, an occasion for renewing their commitment to proclaim the Gospel and give pastoral activity a greater missionary character.



Theology of Mission

Missio Dei is a Latin Christian theological term that can be translated as the "mission of the God," or the "sending of God."

As the continuation of God's mission manifested in Jesus Christ through the Spirit, the Church is missionary by its very nature (AG 1-9).

In the context of the pluralism of religions and theology (LG 16, NA 1-2), the Catholic Church has to remain faithful to its belief in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ (RM 5-8; EA 10-14) and continue his mission of making present God's love and realize the divine reign (EN 8, 26; RM 13-16), while discerning God's salvific presence in the plurality of religions and cultures (EA 15).

Consequently, proclamation of the Good News in a pluralistic context demands

- Ø an integrated process of inter-religious dialogue (EA 29, 31),
- Ø Ecumenism (LG 15, EA 23-28),
- Ø Inculturation (EA 21-22)
- Ø and work for justice, both for humans and the whole earth (EA 32-41).

Church in Asia, according to the report of the FABC, faces the following challenges.

- Ø Unemployment and Poverty
- Ø Health issues
- Ø Interreligious dialogue

The Congregation for the Propagation of Faith is responsible for the celebration of the world mission Sunday every year.

Mission is at the Heart of Christian Faith

Message of Pope Francis for the World Mission Sunday 2017



A bird View

Pope Francis has released his message for World Mission Sunday, focusing on the need to gather round the person of Jesus and to heed his call to “proclaim the Gospel of the love of God the Father in the Power of the Holy Spirit. He also emphasized the Church’s role as being “missionary in nature” and that “young people are the hope of mission.”

Mission at the heart of the Christian faith

This Day invites us to reflect anew on the mission at the heart of the Christian faith. The Church is missionary by nature. What is the basis of our mission? What is the heart of our mission? What are the essential approaches we need to take in carrying out our mission?

1. The Church’s mission, directed to all men and women of good will, is based on the transformative power of the Gospel. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6).
2. Transformation finds expression in worship in spirit and truth (cf. Jn 4:23-24), through a life guided by the Holy Spirit. “The glory of God is the living man” (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* IV, 20, 7).

Mission and the kairos of Christ

3. Through the mission of the Church, Jesus Christ himself continues to evangelize and act; her mission thus makes present in history the kairos, the favourable time of salvation. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, the risen Jesus becomes our contemporary, so that those who welcome him with faith and love can experience the transforming power of his Spirit, who makes humanity and creation fruitful.

“His resurrection is not an event of the past but ever present (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 276).

4. Let us never forget that “being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a Person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (*Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est*, 1).

5. The world vitally needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Church, Christ continues his mission as the Good Samaritan, caring for the bleeding wounds of humanity, and as Good Shepherd, constantly seeking out those who wander along winding paths that lead nowhere.

Mission inspires a spirituality of constant exodus, pilgrimage, and exile

6. The Church's mission is enlivened by a spirituality of constant exodus. We are challenged "to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel" (Evangelii Gaudium, 20). The Church's mission impels us to undertake a constant pilgrimage across the various deserts of life, through the different experiences of hunger and thirst for truth and justice. The Church's mission inspires a sense of constant exile, to make us aware, in our thirst for the infinite, that we are exiles journeying towards our final home, poised between the "already" and "not yet" of the Kingdom of Heaven.

7. Mission reminds the Church that she is not an end unto herself, but a humble instrument and mediation of the Kingdom.

Young people, the hope of mission

8. Young people are the hope of mission. The next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in 2018 on the theme Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, represents a providential opportunity to involve young people in the shared missionary responsibility that needs their rich imagination and creativity.

The service of the Pontifical Mission Societies

9. The Pontifical Mission Societies are a precious means of awakening in every Christian community a desire to reach beyond its own confines and security in order to proclaim the Gospel to all. World Mission Day, promoted by the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, is a good opportunity for enabling the missionary heart of Christian communities to join in prayer, testimony of life and communion of goods, in responding to the vast and pressing needs of evangelization.

Carrying out our mission with Mary, Mother of Evangelization

10. In carrying out our mission, we can draw inspiration from Mary, Mother of Evangelization, who moved by the Spirit, welcomed the Word of life and Yes. Like Mary, we need to discover new ways to bring the gift of salvation to every man and woman.

Lessons learnt from World Mission Sunday



Salvation is a work of God's grace.

1. Evangelization is the work of God.
2. The Gospel is the source of joy, liberation and salvation for all men and women.
3. Mary, the model of humble and joyful evangelization.
4. An Evangelizer Must be Joyful. The Evangelist tells us that the Lord sent the seventy-two disciples two by two into cities and villages to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was near, and to prepare people to meet Jesus. After carrying out this mission of preaching, the disciples returned full of joy: joy is a dominant theme of this first and unforgettable missionary experience (Lk 10:1-25).
5. The Church can evangelize. Church can transform society and bring civilization.
6. All Christians should renew their personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Evangelization Starts with Our Own Relationship with Jesus.
7. Everyone is meant to Evangelize. A true missionary is passionate for the Gospel. Saint Paul said: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16). The mission of the servants of the Word – bishops, priests, religious and laity – is to allow everyone, without exception, to enter into a personal relationship with Christ. In the full range of the Church's missionary activity, all the faithful are called to live their baptismal commitment to the fullest, in accordance with the personal situation of each.
8. We Must Witness the Faith with Our Lives.
9. We Must Encounter People to Evangelize. Let us remember how Paul and Barnabas at the end of their first missionary journey "reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).
10. We Must Know How to Give an Initial Proclamation of Jesus. Don't let lack of training stop you from evangelizing. You can't say you don't have time for the poor.
11. Get Out of Our Comfort Zone. The Church must go out into the streets. Mercy changes the world.

12. Evangelizers Love People. Love is our mission.

13. Everyone needs to be evangelized. Evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus

14. Who are the first to whom the Gospel message must be proclaimed?' It is the poor, the little ones and the sick, those who are often looked down upon or forgotten, those who cannot repay us. 'There is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.

15. By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love. She "is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel" (*Misericordiae Vultus*.12) and to proclaim mercy in every corner of the world, reaching every person, young or old. Missionaries were given the capacity to identify with the young, the marginalized and the oppressed (cf. Deut 4:31; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 111:4).

16. Missionary outreach is a clear sign of the maturity of an ecclesial community" (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 95). Each community is "mature" when it professes faith, celebrates it with joy during the liturgy, lives charity, proclaims the Word of God endlessly, leaves one's own to take it to the "peripheries", especially to those who have not yet had the opportunity to know Christ.

17. To live in this universal dimension, responding to the mandate of Jesus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28, 19) is something enriching for each particular Church, each community, because sending missionaries is never a loss, but a gain.

18. The work of evangelization often finds obstacles, not only externally, but also from within the ecclesial community. Sometimes there is lack of fervour, joy, courage and hope in proclaiming the Message of Christ to all and in helping the people of our time to an encounter with him.

19. Sometimes, it is still thought that proclaiming the truth of the Gospel means an assault on freedom. Paul VI speaks eloquently on this: "It would be... an error to impose something on the consciences of our brethren. But to propose to their consciences the truth of the Gospel and salvation in Jesus Christ, with complete clarity and with total respect for free options which it presents... is a tribute to this freedom" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*.80).

20. There is a clear connection between consecrated life and mission. Those who follow Christ cannot fail to be missionaries, for they know that Jesus "walks with them, speaks to them, breathes with them. They sense Jesus alive with them in the midst of the missionary enterprise" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*.266).(Mission is a passion for Jesus and at the same time a passion for his people.

21. Living as Christian witnesses and as signs of the Father's love among the poor and underprivileged, consecrated persons are called to promote the presence of the lay faithful in the service of Church's mission. As the Second Vatican Council stated: "The laity should cooperate in the Church's work of evangelization; as witnesses and at the same time as living instruments, they share in her saving mission" (*Ad Gentes*.41).

22. The Church's Institutes and Missionary Congregations are completely at the service of those who do not know the Gospel of Jesus. Consecrated missionaries need to generously welcome those who are willing to work with them, even for a limited period of time, for an experience in the field. They are brothers and sisters who want to share the missionary vocation inherent in Baptism. The houses and structures of the missions are natural places to welcome them and to provide for their human, spiritual and apostolic support.

23. Formation of Lay Evangelizers

Lay Institute for the Formation of Evangelization (Claretians-Nochiodai Patti), Arul Chandru (Sacred Heart Brothers-Paramakudi), Amaidiyaham (CIC Sisters-Devakottai), and Aruvadai (Dindigul Diocese-Vellodu) are some of the great initiates in Tamil Nadu.

After completion of the training, they make a retreat to discern and decide their special vocation as lay evangelizers. Having gone through the process they make a solemn vow to the Bishop during the Eucharistic Celebration.

Fr. Joseph Santiago cmf, is in touch with the Lay evangelists in Tamil Nadu.

Some of the activities of the lay evangelists are,

- Ø To do faith based ministries wherever and whenever they are sent by the Commission
- Ø To propagate Catholic faith
- Ø To undertake special parish ministry when they are invited
- Ø To involve in Lenten village ministry every year
- Ø To organize faith camps in villages
- Ø To visit families and strengthen faith
- Ø To conduct bible sharing sessions, conventions, seminars, trainings retreats, prayer sessions, healing sessions etc.
- Ø To settle disputes in villages and families
- Ø To involve in pastoral activities of the parish and prepare the faithful for meaningful celebration of liturgy
- Ø To guide and strengthen Catholic flock
- Ø To prepare catechumens
- Ø To help Catholics to get rid of social evils and superstitions

- Ø To share the Word of God through relevant ways and means and distribute Bibles
- Ø To teach Catechism and expose children into Catholic traditions
- Ø To initiate and form laity as disciples and lay evangelizers
- Ø To publish conventional and media resources on Word of God and Catholic faith
- Ø To engage in personal and group prayer sessions for various intentions of the Church and the Society

24. Therefore, on this World Mission Sunday, all of us are invited to "go out" as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family.

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Building up the Kingdom of God after the manner of the Apostles in the style of Claret.
commitment to the formation of the missionaries and the Laity

Fr. Joseph Santiago cmf