

FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

DATE: October 1, 2017 (26th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

THEME: Every Christian is a Missionary

READINGS: Ez 18:25-28 / Ps 25:4-5.6-7.8-9 / Phil 2:1-11 / Mt 21:28-32

REFLECTION FROM: CBCP - *Tell the World: Catechetical Modules for Mission Animation*

Every Christian is a Missionary

Jesus is the Gift of God. “God who is love sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (1 Jn 4:8-9). Christ first of all proclaims a Kingdom: “The Kingdom of God is at hand!” (Mk 1:15). The kernel of this message is the good news of salvation. The Kingdom is a great gift of God, which is a liberation from everything that oppresses humankind, but above all, liberation from sin and the evil one, in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him.

Jesus carries out this proclamation in innumerable signs. He was close to the poor, the forgotten and the lowly, ate with sinners, touched the unclean, wept for a dead friend, welcomed the children, changed water into wine, multiplied bread, and washed the feet of His disciples. At His touch, all experienced the nearness of a compassionate and forgiving God.

The mission of Jesus gave birth to the formation of the first community of believers and evangelizers. Through His apostles, the Gospel continued to be proclaimed. Those who believed accepted His message and were baptized. Thus, a Church was born. Christ founded the Church to continue His saving mission on earth.... Jesus sent the Church to continue His own mission. The Church founded upon the twelve apostles was commissioned by Jesus to go to “all nations” and He assured them of His presence in this task.

The Church is Missionary in Her Very Nature. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always until the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20).

The Holy Spirit whom the apostles experienced on Pentecost transforms them and gives them the ability to bear witness to Jesus “with boldness” (Acts 4:13, 29, 31). Thus, the Good News of Jesus spread out from Jerusalem to the farthest ends of the world.

Paul and Barnabas are impelled by the Spirit to go to the Gentiles. From then on the Church opens her doors so that all may enter. In the Church each person can feel at home, while keeping one's culture and traditions, provided that these are not contrary to the Gospel (cf. Acts 15:36 ff.).

Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the Church continues the mission of Jesus. Evangelization constitutes her essential mission. She exists in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace (EN 14), and a sign and instrument of salvation. The Church, having been sent and evangelized, also sends out evangelizers. She also gives a mandate and sends them out to preach the Gospel with complete fidelity (EN 15).

All Christians are Called to Mission. By virtue of Baptism, Christians participate in the three-fold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King. They are called into mission and “to live prophetically as Christ lived, to witness as He did, and to communicate Christ who loves, who serves, who saves” (PCP II), so that the message of salvation may be made known and accepted throughout the world.

Every Christian is a missionary. Each one has a place in the Church's mission in various fields: social, economic, cultural, political and religious. It is in the accomplishment of our mission in fidelity to Jesus and the Church that we will find the perfection of our Christian life.

Holy Spirit, Principal Agent of Mission. The work of mission will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit. He is present in all the activities of Jesus.... As Jesus was empowered by the Spirit, he also sends forth His own disciples saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). Only after they had received the Holy Spirit did they begin the work of proclaiming the Good News to all. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke boldly and those who heard asked to be baptized (cf. Acts 2:1-17).

It is in the “consolation of the Holy Spirit” that the Church increases. It is He who makes the faithful know, understand and accept the teachings of Jesus and of His mystery. It is the Holy Spirit, who today as it was in the beginning, acts in every missionary, allowing each person to be seized and led by Him. The Holy Spirit enables us to find the words to utter and allows the heart of the hearer to be open and receive the Good News of the Kingdom being proclaimed.

While techniques, even the most sophisticated ones are good, still these cannot replace the gentle action of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, the best technical preparation has no effect and has no power over the human heart.

The Family, the “Domestic Church” in Mission. The family is a basic cell of society. It is the cradle of life and love, the place in which the individual “is born” and “grows.” It deserves the beautiful name “domestic church.” It means that some aspects of the Church are present in the family.

By the witness of their Christian lives, Christian families become a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which it radiates. Thus, families are a solid starting point for a new society, based on a “civilization of love.”

We can ask ourselves: What can we concretely share for the growth of the Church for an increase of missionary zeal in our parish and in our family?

Tell the World ... Catechetical Modules for Mission Animation, edited by **Father James H. Kroeger, M.M.**, was published by the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Mission in preparation for the National Mission Congress held in Cebu on September 27 – October 1, 2000.