

# **ALIVE IN FAITH AND MISSION**



**Baptized  
and sent**

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ON  
MISSION IN THE WORLD**

**RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR THE  
EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH**

**OCTOBER 2019**



**WORLD MISSION DAY  
OCTOBER 20, 2019**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Prayer for the Extraordinary Missionary Month</b>	2
<b>Foreword</b>	3
<b>World Mission Day 2019 Papal Message</b>	4
<b>MEDITATIONS FOR MISSION</b>	9
<i>Daily Reflections for October 2019</i> James H. Kroeger, MM	10
<b>MISSION NARRATIVES</b>	43
<i>Mission in the Mandate of Jesus</i> Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS	44
<i>God's Commissioning</i> Rico Gerardo Jazmin, SVD	46
<i>Our Journey in Dialogue</i> Carlos V. Reyes	48
<i>Mission to the Emotionally and Spiritually Wounded</i> Jimmy Leornas	52
<i>Transformative Encounters Beyond Borders</i> Rosa Angelica Libron, SSpS	54
<i>An Unexpected Journey</i> Demi Rey Kel Andoy	56
<i>Maximum Illud Centennial</i> James H. Kroeger, MM	59
<b>REPORTS</b>	63
<i>A. Collections</i>	64
<i>B. Projects</i>	66
<b>Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions For 2020</b>	68

**Prayer for the  
Extraordinary Missionary Month  
October 2019**

*Heavenly Father,  
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ  
rose from the dead,  
he commissioned his followers  
to “go and make disciples of all nations”  
and you remind us that through our Baptism  
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.*

*Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit  
to be courageous and zealous  
in bearing witness to the Gospel,  
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,  
which is still very far from completion,  
may find new and efficacious expressions  
that bring life and light to the world.*

*Help us make it possible for all peoples  
to experience the saving love  
and mercy of Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever.  
Amen.*



**PMS National Director**

Esteban U. Lo, LRMS

**General Editor**

James H. Kroeger, MM

**Design Lay-out**

Eric Jason C. Sarol

## FOREWORD

The good Lord works wonders in the ordinary moments of every person. He invites us to work with him in the ordinary events of our lives. Because of him, everything ordinary has a touch of real depth and true beauty—much more so in extraordinary instances of our journey as individuals and as a community.

October 2019 is not just any Missionary Month. It is the Extraordinary Missionary Month (EMM) decreed by Pope Francis on the occasion of the centenary of the promulgation of Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter on mission, *Maximum Illud*. We praise the Lord of the Harvest for this extraordinary month of grace. We thank our current Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) for being such missionary popes.

Our Homily Reflections booklet this October 2019 is really something special. We have reflections not only for the Sundays of the month but for each day of the month. We have mission stories as well from some of our fellow missionary disciples—lay, religious and priests.

I am grateful to Father James Kroeger, MM, for sharing his reflections and for editing this publication. I am thankful as well to all the other contributors and to the staff of the national office of Pontifical Mission Societies - Philippines.

For more reflections, mission animation and mission formation materials kindly visit [www.october2019.va](http://www.october2019.va). It is the official website for the celebration and living out of the EMM. May the EMM theme, “Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World” inspire, challenge and empower us to once again come forward and say: “Here I am. Send me.”



**Msgr. Esteban U. Lo, LRMS**  
PMS National Director

# MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS WORLD MISSION DAY 2019

## *Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For the month of October 2019, I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV (November 30, 1919). Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

The title of the present message is the same as that of October's Missionary Month: "Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World." Celebrating this month will help us first to rediscover the missionary dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ, a faith graciously bestowed on us in baptism. Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life. This divine life is not a product for sale—we do not practice proselytism—but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission. We received this gift freely and we share it freely (cf. Mt 10:8), without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation (cf. 1 Tim 2:4; *Lumen Gentium* 48).

The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God's own eyes and heart. Hope opens us up to

the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share. Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth (cf. Mic 5:4; Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:18). A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion. How many saints, how many men and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness; this going forth in mercy is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-21)! The man who preaches God must be a man of God (cf. *Maximum Illud*).

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God's love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God's love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life (cf. Eph 1:3-6).

This life is bestowed on us in baptism, which grants us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, the conqueror of sin and death. Baptism gives us rebirth in God's own image and likeness, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. In this sense, baptism is truly necessary for salvation for it ensures that we are always and everywhere sons and daughters in the house of the Father, and never orphans, strangers or slaves. What in the Christian is a sacramental reality—whose fulfillment is found in the Eucharist—remains the vocation and destiny of every man and woman in search of conversion and salvation. For baptism fulfills the promise of the gift of God that makes everyone a son or daughter in the Son. We are children of our natural parents, but in baptism we receive the origin of all fatherhood and true motherhood: no one can have God for a Father who does not have the Church for a mother (cf. Saint Cyprian, *De Cath. Eccl.*, 6).

Our mission, then, is rooted in the fatherhood of God and the motherhood of the Church. The mandate given by the Risen Jesus at Easter is inherent in baptism: as the Father has sent me, so I send you, filled with the Holy Spirit, for the reconciliation of the world (cf. Jn 20:19-23; Mt 28:16-20). This mission is part of our identity as Christians; it makes us responsible for enabling all men and women to realize their vocation to be adoptive children of the Father, to recognize their personal dignity and to appreciate the intrinsic worth of every human life, from conception until natural death. Today's rampant secularism, when it becomes an aggressive cultural rejection of God's active fatherhood in our history, is an obstacle to authentic human fraternity, which finds expression in reciprocal respect for the life of each person. Without the God of Jesus Christ, every difference is reduced to a baneful threat, making impossible any real fraternal acceptance and fruitful unity within the human race.

The universality of the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ led Benedict XV to call for an end to all forms of nationalism and ethnocentrism, or the merging of the preaching of the Gospel with the economic and military interests of the colonial powers. In his Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, the Pope noted that the Church's universal mission requires setting aside exclusivist ideas of membership in one's own country and ethnic group. The opening of the culture and the community to the salvific newness of Jesus Christ requires leaving behind every kind of undue ethnic and ecclesial introversion. Today too, the Church needs men and women who, by virtue of their baptism, respond generously to the call to leave behind home, family, country, language and local Church, and to be sent forth to the nations, to a world not yet transformed by the sacraments of Jesus Christ and his holy Church. By proclaiming God's word, bearing witness to the Gospel and celebrating the life of the Spirit, they summon to conversion, baptize and offer Christian salvation, with respect for the freedom of each person and in dialogue with the cultures and religions of the peoples to whom they are sent. The *missio ad gentes*, which is always necessary for the Church, thus contributes in a fundamental way to the process of ongoing conversion in all Christians. Faith in the Easter event of Jesus; the ecclesial mission received in baptism;



the geographic and cultural detachment from oneself and one's own home; the need for salvation from sin and liberation from personal and social evil: all these demand the mission that reaches to the very ends of the earth.

The providential coincidence of this centenary year with the celebration of the Special Synod on the Churches in the Amazon allows me to emphasize how the mission entrusted to us by Jesus with the gift of his Spirit is also timely and necessary for those lands and their peoples. A renewed Pentecost opens wide the doors of the Church, in order that no culture remain closed in on itself and no people cut off from the universal communion of the faith. No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption, in the self-referentiality of his or her own ethnic and religious affiliation. The Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all.

Here I am reminded of the words of Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of the meeting of Latin American Bishops at Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007. I would like to repeat these words and make them my own: "Yet what did the acceptance of the Christian faith mean for the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean? For them, it meant knowing and welcoming Christ, the unknown God whom their ancestors were seeking, without realizing it, in their rich religious traditions. Christ is the Savior for whom they were silently longing. It also meant that they received, in the waters of baptism, the divine life that made them children of God by adoption; moreover, they received the Holy Spirit who came to make their cultures fruitful, purifying them and developing the numerous seeds that the incarnate Word had planted in them, thereby guiding them along the paths of the Gospel.... The Word of God, in becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, also became history and culture. The utopia of going back to breathe life into the pre-Columbian religions, separating them from Christ and from the universal Church, would not be a step forward: indeed, it would be a step back. In reality, it would be a retreat towards a stage in history anchored in the past" (Address at the Inaugural Session, May 13, 2007: *Insegnamenti III*, 1 [2007], 855-856).

We entrust the Church's mission to Mary our Mother. In union with her Son, from the moment of the Incarnation, the Blessed Virgin set out on her pilgrim way. She was fully involved in the mission of Jesus, a mission that became her own at the foot of the Cross: the mission of cooperating, as Mother of the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith.

I would like to conclude with a brief word about the Pontifical Mission Societies, already proposed in *Maximum Illud* as a missionary resource. The Pontifical Mission Societies serve the Church's universality as a global network of support for the Pope in his missionary commitment by prayer, the soul of mission, and charitable offerings from Christians throughout the world. Their donations assist the Pope in the evangelization efforts of particular Churches (the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith), in the formation of local clergy (the Pontifical Society of Saint Peter the Apostle), in raising missionary awareness in children (Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood) and in encouraging the missionary dimension of Christian faith (Pontifical Missionary Union). In renewing my support for these Societies, I trust that the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 will contribute to the renewal of their missionary service to my ministry.

To men and women missionaries, and to all those who, by virtue of their baptism, share in any way in the mission of the Church, I send my heartfelt blessing.

*From the Vatican, June 9, 2019, Solemnity of Pentecost*

*Franciscus*

**FRANCIS**

# MEDITATIONS FOR MISSION



# Introduction

Pope Francis, during the Angelus Prayer on World Mission Sunday, October 22, 2017, publicly announced to the whole Church his intention to celebrate an Extraordinary Missionary Month for October 2019. One key aspect of this event is to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* which gave new impetus to the missionary work of proclaiming the Gospel. Pope Francis desires to reignite the baptismal awareness of the People of God in relation to the mission of the Church. He provided the theme for this celebration: "Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World."

With this vision in mind, the National Office of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Philippines, under the direction of Monsignor Esteban U. Lo, LRMS, in conjunction with his collaborators, decided to prepare mission-focused reflections for each day of October 2019. These meditations for mission are now presented in this handy booklet, designed to be easily distributed and used on a daily basis. Hopefully, priests, religious, catechists, missionaries, and all the lay faithful will find these reflections to be a source of genuine renewal of their mission dedication!

These brief meditations correspond to the spiritual dimensions indicated by Pope Francis in his call for this Extraordinary Missionary Month. The Pope desires a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ alive in the Church, a reflection on the witness and lives of missionary saints and martyrs, a dedication to missionary formation and catechetics, and a renewed practice of missionary charity.

Pope Francis himself has spoken eloquently about missionary evangelization in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*). For Francis, "missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*" (15). Francis quotes the words of Saint John Paul II: "today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church" (15). Pope Francis says: "I dream of a 'missionary option' ... capable of transforming everything" (27); "throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'" (25).

Friends, as you peruse these mission reflections during October 2019 (and even beyond), may you discover anew that, in Pope Francis' words, "Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people" (268)!

- James H. Kroeger, MM

# The “Little Way” of Loving

The “mission month” of October opens with the feast of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, patroness of mission. She was born in France on January 2, 1873. Her exemplary parents, Zélie and Louis Martin, were canonized on October 18, 2015 by Pope Francis. Thérèse died of tuberculosis on September 30, 1897, at the tender age of twenty-four.

Thérèse would have probably attracted little notice, except for her posthumously published autobiographical manuscript, *The Story of a Soul*. Essentially, the work is about the path to holiness in everyday life. Thérèse was canonized on May 17, 1925, only twenty-eight years after her death. On December 14, 1927, Pope Pius XI proclaimed her the principal patroness, equal to Saint Francis Xavier, of all missionaries, men and women, and of all the missions in the whole world. More recently on World Mission Sunday (October 19, 1997), Pope John Paul II named Thérèse a Doctor of the Church.

Saint Thérèse understood that what is important in the Christian life is great love and not great deeds. Thérèse, the saint of the “little way,” developed a spirituality of ordinariness, in which one offers each moment and every deed simply and lovingly to God. Known as “the Little Flower,” Thérèse is a source of deep hope to millions who desire to serve God through their littleness, simplicity, and love. They find in Thérèse their own vocation and spirituality, their “doable” and “livable” pathway of daily sanctification.

We listen to brief excerpts from Thérèse’s profound insights. “Merit is not to be found in doing much or in giving much, but rather in receiving and in loving much.” “Perfection consists in doing his will, in being that which He wants us to be.” Indeed, Thérèse’s “little way” is the way of hope for all desiring to be missionaries and “saints of the ordinary.”

## Celebrating God's Messengers

As the Church observes the feast of the Guardian Angels, let us recall that simple, reassuring prayer we were taught as children: "Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

The word "angel" comes from the Greek word *angelos* meaning "messenger." Angels are spiritual creatures created by God; their existence is an article of our Catholic faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (328) states: "The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls 'angels' is a truth of the faith."

The Bible is filled with appearances of angels, especially at significant moments in salvation history; they act as God's messengers. An angel announces to Mary that she will conceive a son to be named Jesus (Lk 1:26-38). Joseph is advised to take Mary as his wife by an angel (Mt 1:18-25). Angels announce Jesus' birth to the shepherds (Lk 2:1-20). When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to Jesus' tomb they encounter an angel who announces that Jesus has risen (Mt 28:1-8).

Jesus himself spoke of the loving care that angels offer to each of us: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father (Mt 18:10). Indeed, our personal guardian angel is beside us always, manifesting God's caring, loving presence and leading us on the path to eternal life.

Pope Francis has spoken about guardian angels, advising us to listen to our guardian angels with meekness and respect. Our personal angel as God's "missionary" always accompanies us, protecting and advising us like an intimate friend. We are truly grateful for God's love, manifested through the beautiful gift of angels, especially our personal guardian angel!

# Jesus' Guidelines for Mission

Our beautiful Gospel today narrates Jesus' choice of seventy-two followers and sends them out on mission. Thus, we should conclude that mission is for **all** of Jesus' disciples—**all** baptized Christians, not just the religious or ordained. Everyone, particularly parents and even grandparents, has a great mission to fulfill! Note that mission begins with God's initiative, with Jesus' choice. We do not engage in mission based on our decision; "You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (Jn 15:16).

Recall that "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." This was true in Jesus' time and remains true today. We must recognize the great task that faces us as Christians in the world; we turn to the Lord in prayer, asking for additional harvesters. Then, Jesus gives a brief, yet direct instruction: "Be on your way." Do *not* delay! Go, and go now!

Remember that you will face many challenges; you will be like lambs in the midst of wolves. Recognize that some people will welcome your message, while others will reject both you and your very mission. Jesus advises his missionaries to "travel light." Don't let material "stuff" weigh you down and get in the way of your ministry of preaching Jesus' Good News.

The missioner is to extend peace to everyone; in other words, the Christian message is one of "mercy and compassion" (theme of Pope Francis' 2015 visit to the Philippines). In addition, recall Pope Francis' advice to go to the margins, the peripheries, to the excluded in society. Make the announcement of Jesus' *Kingdom message* your central emphasis; proclaim that "the reign of God is near." Indeed, as Christians we **all** are to carry on the mission task that Jesus gave us; we are *joyful heralds* of Christ's Good News!

## *Laudato Sí* of Pope Francis

On this feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, we recall that his namesake Pope Francis has written a lengthy encyclical focused on the environment: *Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home*. This document proposes that the care of the earth is a moral and spiritual concern. Francis issues an urgent call to action, pointedly asking: “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” (LS 160).

Recalling the beautiful canticle of creation of Francis of Assisi, the pope notes that the earth, our sister, “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her” (2). Francis seeks to “address every person living on this planet.... I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home” (3). Francis of Assisi helps us see the need for “an integral ecology” (11).

We may ask: What is happening to our common home, our beautiful world? “The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth” (21). “These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture” (22). We need to take a “frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair” (61). Although “humanity has disappointed God’s expectations” (61), there is genuine hope.

Pope Francis sees “the rich contribution which religions can make towards an integral ecology and the full development of humanity” (62). “The work of the Church seeks not only to remind everyone of the duty to care for nature, but at the same time she must above all protect humanity from self-destruction” (79). Like Francis of Assisi, we must adopt “the gaze of Jesus” on the world and all creation.



# Rejoicing in Mission

The seventy-two disciples that Jesus sent out on mission return to Jesus and express their joyful satisfaction that their mission proved successful. They were amazed that even the demonic powers were subject to them (in Hebrew thought, snakes and scorpions were symbols of various kinds of evils). Jesus rejoices with his disciples at the success of their missionary efforts.

Jesus then brings his disciples to a deeper understanding of their mission; they should rejoice not only that they were able to dispel the evil spirits, but that their names are written in heaven. The deepest joy of missionary-disciples is to realize that they are loved by God; they have become the chosen brothers and sisters of Jesus. In short, whether one's missionary efforts meet positive results or not, our deep joy comes from knowing that we are doing the mission for which we have been chosen and sent by Jesus.

Recall that at the beginning of this “missionary section” of Luke's Gospel, Jesus sent out the seventy-two to prepare the towns and villages that he himself was going to visit (cf. Lk 10:1). As Jesus' messengers we are to always remember that we are preparing people for acceptance of Jesus. Through our words and deeds we are readying the way for Jesus. We are like the precursor John the Baptist preparing for Jesus; “He must increase; I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). A modern translation says: “He must grow greater; I must grow smaller.”

Today's Gospel concludes with Jesus telling his disciples that they should find great joy in their mission for their own eyes have seen the great things that God is accomplishing; salvation is arriving before their very own eyes. We truly rejoice whenever God uses us to accomplish his purposes. Indeed, as missionary disciples, we are Jesus' “servants-become-friends” (cf. Jn 15:14-15)!

# Exploring Mission Motivation

The final verse of today's Gospel from Saint Luke (17:10) succinctly captures how we as Christ's disciples should view ourselves and our Christian commitment; we are to simply consider ourselves as *servants*. We are not to *expect* rewards from God. We do not somehow *earn* rewards; our works do not *merit* God's benevolence. Such attitudes reflect the ancient Pelagian heresy, which Pope Francis critiques in his recent document on holiness in today's world (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 47-59).

As Pope Francis explains: "His friendship infinitely transcends us; we cannot buy it with our works; it can only be a gift born of his loving initiative" (54). "We cannot celebrate this free gift of the Lord's friendship unless we realize that our earthly life and natural abilities are his gift. We need to acknowledge jubilantly that our life is essentially a gift, and recognize that our freedom is a grace" (55). It is only "on the basis of God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received" (56), that we become truly God's missionary servants.

Yet, we may ask: Why evangelize and engage in mission? The Asian Bishops (FABC) have enunciated an insightful perspective on our service and "motivation for mission." They note five motives: "We evangelize, first of all, from a deep sense of **gratitude to God....** Mission is above all else an overflow of this life from grateful hearts transformed by the grace of God.... But mission is also a **mandate**. We evangelize because we are sent into the whole world to make disciples of all nations.... We evangelize also because we **believe** in the Lord Jesus.... We evangelize also because we have been **incorporated by baptism into the Church**, which is missionary by its very nature.... And finally, we evangelize because the Gospel is **leaven** for liberation and for the transformation of society. These are authentic motives of Jesus' missionary servants!

# Praying the World Mission Rosary

October, popularly known as “mission month,” includes the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Each of the twenty rosary decades is devoted to a meditation on a “mystery” centered on the life of Jesus or Mary. Here the word “mystery” refers to a truth of our faith, *not* something which is incomprehensible. Thus, when Catholics pray the rosary, they are to *meditate* on twenty particular truths of the faith found in the Bible or in Catholic doctrine. These “mysteries” are grouped into four categories: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous. Indeed, for numerous Catholics the rosary is truly a form of contemplative prayer, a source of profound meditation.

In February 1951 Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, during his *The Catholic Hour* radio address, inaugurated a unique approach to the rosary. He noted: “We must pray, and not for ourselves alone, but for the world. To this end, I have designed the World Mission Rosary. Each of the five decades is of a different color to represent the continents.” Praying the rosary in this manner is to aid the Pope and the entire Church fulfill its missionary mandate.

The schema that Sheen proposed (whether or not one has the colored rosary beads) is: first, **green** is for the forests and grasslands of *Africa*; second, **blue** is for the ocean surrounding the *Pacific Islands*; third, **white** is for *Europe*, the seat of the Holy Father, the Church’s shepherd; fourth, **red** recalls the fire of faith that brought missionaries to the *Americas*; and, fifth, **yellow** represents the morning light of the East and *Asia*. This approach focuses on the “mission intention” of each decade; it is easily integrated with one’s customary manner of praying the rosary. We recall that Saint John Paul II encouraged everyone to intensify the praying of the rosary “to obtain from the Lord those graces that the Church and humanity especially need.”

# Living an Integrated Life in Mission

Today's Gospel, which is also used for the feast of Saint Martha, probably reflects a typical scene from the life of Jesus. He had a very close friendship relationship with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, often going to their home in Bethany to relax, enjoy their company, share some of Martha's good cooking, and simply rest from his demanding ministry activities.

Saint Luke presents Mary seated near Jesus and listening to him. Martha, being a good host, is busy with all the demands of hospitality. Understandably, she becomes upset that Mary seems to be taking it easy and leaving all the work to her. Jesus lovingly cautions Martha not to be overly concerned about all the details of serving.

Is Jesus rebuking Martha, even disregarding her concerns, when he says that Mary "has chosen the better part"? Certainly not! He is gently reminding Martha to keep everything in balance, to fulfill one's daily duties (work, cook, wash, clean) and still remain centered on Christ (time for prayer and reflection). This is captured well in the Benedictine motto: *ora et labora*, pray and work. We need both prayer and work in order to live a truly Christian life, to accomplish our mission. If we as active evangelizers were to embrace prayer without also performing the tasks inherent in our missionary calling, we would stagnate. When guided by God's Will, our labors bring us closer to Him.

Likewise, our mission work loses its meaning if it is not grounded in prayer, meditation, and reflection. Everything in our lives is *not* under our control. We cannot do anything except through the grace of God. Before we begin our missionary tasks, we must first turn to God in prayer. Rooted in God's love, we can more effectively carry out our mission. In a word, we are to be genuine "contemplatives in action."

# Knowing God as Compassionate Father

Christian creeds address God as “the Father, the almighty.” God’s fatherhood is a clear hallmark of Jesus’ life and prayer. Frequently, Jesus prays to his *Abba*. He calls God “my Father” (Mt 11:26; Lk 10:21). His mission is from the Father (Jn 11:41-42). During the last supper he addresses his Father (Jn 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25). Jesus turned to his *Abba* in the crisis moments of his life: Gethsemane (Mk 14:36; Mt 26:42), Calvary (Lk 23:34). His dying words are: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46).

Because Jesus the Lord taught this prayer to his disciples, it is known as the “Lord’s Prayer.” Tertullian called it “the summary of the whole Gospel,” and Saint Thomas Aquinas said it is “the most perfect of all prayers.” When we Christians in faith express our needs to our Father, we are also committing ourselves to making our prayer requests a reality. For example, praying for our daily bread means doing our part and sharing in the Church’s mission to relieve hunger and deprivation in the world.

In a unique way, Pope Francis, the “pope of mercy,” has focused the Church’s mission on the theme of mercy. Recall his document, *Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy)*, wherein he proclaimed an entire *year of mercy*. Francis says: “We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.... Mercy [is] the bridge that connects God and man” (MV 2).

For Pope Francis, God the Father’s mercy is central to the Church’s life and mission. “All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy” (MV 10). “Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (MV 12).

## Befriending Others: A Mission Paradigm

Today's Gospel speaks of friendship, a theme relevant to our celebration of the special "mission month" proclaimed by Pope Francis. The Gospels are filled with numerous examples of Jesus approaching others in friendship. Saint Luke shows Jesus compassionately reaching out to lepers, paralytics, sinners, tax collectors, the centurion, widows, demoniacs, epileptics; Luke's list is extensive. Jesus himself is the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) and the compassionate father (Lk 15:11-32). At the Last Supper Jesus says: "One can have no greater love that to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:13-14).

The eminent Catholic scripture scholar Rudolph Schnackenburg has written a moving book with the title *The Friend We Have in Jesus*. His insights are truly profound: "Friendship is really a comprehensive expression for our relationship with him [Jesus].... Our friend Jesus calls to us: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest'.... That is the voice of the friend who understands us and reveals his heart to us.... Each person must conclude for himself or herself that Jesus is the friend—indeed the personal friend—of every human being."

In his beautiful *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, Francis notes: "The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus" (1). "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ.... I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day" (3). Francis continues: "this encounter—or renewed encounter—with God's love ... blossoms into an *enriching friendship*.... Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization" (8). For Pope Francis—and each of us: "Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people" (268).

# Saint John XXIII: The Joyful Pope

Today we celebrate the life and significant contribution of one of the Church's recently canonized saints: Pope John XXIII. He, along with John Paul II, was declared a saint on April 27, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday. Over the years of his short pontificate (1958-1963) John XXIII became a beloved figure worldwide; he was popularly known as "Good Pope John." He is remembered for the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) with its *aggiornamento* agenda for the renewal and updating of the Church. In fact, John XXIII's annual feast day on October 11 is fixed to commemorate his opening of Vatican II on October 11, 1962. Each year as the Church celebrates this saint, we are asked to recall the pivotal role of Vatican II in renewing the life and mission of the Church.

Of the many gifts that John XXIII left to the Church one was his "Daily Decalogue." The following are some brief excerpts: **(1)** Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively; **(2)** Only for today, I will not criticize anyone; **(3)** Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy; **(4)** Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances; **(5)** Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading.

Pope John's Decalogue continues: **(6)** Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it; **(7)** Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; **(8)** Only for today, I will make a plan for myself; **(9)** Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me; and **(10)** Only for today, I will have no fears. We marvel at John XXIII's wisdom, guiding us in fulfilling our mission!

## Who Are Truly Blessed?

Today's short Gospel is only two verses; each verse contains the same word "blessed," *makarios* in Greek and *beatus* in Latin. Commonly translated into English as "blessed," this word also means: happy, blissful, joyful, fortunate, fulfilled. It refers to a state of spiritual well-being; one experiences genuine joy in one's soul. When the word refers to a person, it means that this one is held in reverence and respected. Who are such persons that deserve to be called "blessed"? Jesus' answer is clear and direct: "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it." These words open a pathway for a profound reflection on our Christian missionary vocation.

Recent popes have emphasized integrating the "hearing" and "keeping" of God's Word; one must be a "listener" and a "doer"! Evangelization demands both contemplation and concrete action. Recall the challenge presented by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (41): "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Pope John Paul II refers to this insight of Paul VI in *Redemptoris Missio* (42): "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories." Pope Francis combines "hearing" God's Word as disciples and "doing" the Word as missionaries in *Evangelii Gaudium* (120): "we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples'."

The New Testament reveals that the first person to receive the honor of being called blessed is none other than Mary herself. Pope Francis emphasizes Mary's path of faith as an example for all Christians; we listen to his words, inspiring us to live out our mission as evangelizers. Blessed Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, strengthen our faith to truly become your Son's missionary disciples!



# Authentic Missionary Service

An obvious parallel exists between today's first reading and the Gospel: the curing of victims of leprosy. The ten lepers call out: "Jesus! Master! Take pity on us." Jesus heals them and asks them to be "certified" by the Jewish priests that they have been cured. Surprisingly, only one returns to express his gratitude to Jesus. Jesus confirms the grateful Samaritan's "profound healing" by telling him: "Your faith has saved you."

These Scripture narratives invite us to recall the life of a sterling missionary who profoundly transformed people's lives. Jozef Damien de Veuster, popularly known as "Damien the Leper," was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 11, 2009. Born in 1840 on a small farm near Louvain in Belgium, he left for Hawaii in 1863 and arrived six months later; he was ordained in Honolulu in May 1864. Damien served for nine years on the Island of Hawaii. In early 1873, he was the first priest volunteer who offered himself to serve the lepers who were segregated on the island of Molokai, since there was no known cure for the dreaded disease which was ravaging the island archipelago.

Damien's assignment letter from Father Modeste, his religious superior, read: "You may stay as long as your devotion dictates." Damien read the letter over and over again—until his death sixteen years later at age 49. As a missionary on Molokai, Damien wrote his brother in Europe: "I make myself a leper with the lepers to gain all for Jesus Christ. That is why, in preaching, I say 'we lepers,' not, 'my brethren'." Damien strove to configure himself to Christ. He died on April 15, 1889; it was Holy Week. Damien lived a transformed and transforming life. His example of service of the poor inspires us not to forget the needy right in our midst. Saint Damien, apostle of compassion, pray for us.

# Paul's Dynamic Mission Principles

The apostle Paul is undoubtedly the greatest missionary of all times; his mission vocation is succinctly captured in today's first reading. This brief presentation surfaces ten "mission principles," valid for Paul of Tarsus as well as for all modern-day Pauls.

**(1) Depth Awareness of Vocation.** For Paul and all missionaries, *mission originates in the call of God.* **(2) Radical Commitment to Christ.** Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus road was only the starting point of a life-long relationship; *mission envisions a totally Christ-centered life.* **(3) Voluntary Acceptance of Suffering.** The Apostle Paul preached the Gospel by his life and example. *Vulnerability and acceptance of the cross authenticate mission.* **(4) Insightful Mission Methods.** Paul employed distinct methods to achieve his purposes. *Mission demands creative, inculturated, ever-renewed approaches to evangelization.* **(5) Urgent Gospel Proclamation.** Paul heralds a message from God that profoundly affects all humanity. *Mission has lost none of its urgency in the contemporary world.*

**6. Deep Love of the Church.** For Paul the Church is primarily the local community of baptized followers of Jesus Christ. *Mission and love of the people who constitute the Church go hand-in-hand.* **(7) Close Collaboration with Co-workers.** Paul, though a strong individual, was a team-worker in the task of evangelization. *All apostolic ministry is enhanced through collaborative efforts.* **(8) Commitment to Social Transformation.** Paul's preaching of liberation included a manifest concern for the poor and suffering. *The Gospel message of human dignity leads to social transformation.* **(9) Effective, Exemplary Life-style.** Paul was always careful to live an authentic life-style. *The witness of a Christian life is the first and often most effective proclamation of the Gospel.* **(10) Total Reliance on God's Providence.** Paul asks: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31). *Mission always remains "God's project."* Pastors, missionaries, catechists, religious, laity, all ministers of the Church, imitate Paul, the joyful evangelizer!

# Called to Missionary Holiness

Every Christian is called to holiness and intimacy with the Lord that characterizes the lives of saints such as Teresa of Avila, whose feast we celebrate today. This same invitation is reiterated by Pope Francis, through his 2018 apostolic exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)*. Francis' inviting document bears the subtitle: "On the Call to Holiness in Today's World," echoing the identical invitation found in Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* (39-42). As missionary-disciples of Jesus, we listen to some pivotal insights from Pope Francis.

The Pope asserts that his writing is meant to be very practical: "My modest goal is to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time" (2). The Lord "wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence" (1). Undoubtedly, there are many forms of holiness. "We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness" (11). Francis praises what he calls "the middle class of holiness" (7); this includes ordinary people such as parents, workers, the sick and elderly. Holiness is often found "in our next-door neighbors" (7).

"This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures" (16). We "need only find a more perfect way of doing what we are already doing" (17). "A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness" (19). "You too need to see the entirety of your life as a mission" (23). "Life does not have a mission, but is a mission" (27). "To the extent that each Christian grows in holiness, he or she will bear greater fruit for our world" (33). Francis affirms the challenging words of Leon Bloy: "The only great tragedy in life is not to become a saint" (34). Saint Teresa of Avila would certainly agree!

# Popular Piety Serving Mission

Today the Church recalls the life and contribution of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), a French Visitation nun, who received visions of the Sacred Heart and popularized the devotion, guided by her spiritual director, Saint Claude Colombiere. Many Catholics are familiar with the “First Friday” tradition of receiving the Eucharist for nine consecutive months. Margaret Mary asserted that those keeping the First Fridays would not die in sin or without the sacraments; Christ the Sacred Heart would be their refuge at the hour of death.

How can such valid popular piety serve mission? How could a devotion, which sometimes may be limited to a personal, private practice, become more relevant today? Recall the original symbol manifested to Margaret Mary: *a heart afire with love for humanity that was surmounted by a cross*. This symbol clearly implies that devotion to the Sacred Heart is intimately connected with the paschal mystery: the mystery of Jesus’ dying and rising again. In a word, it means that the Sacred Heart calls Christians to mission and a self-sacrificing love for one’s neighbor, a committed love ready to face the challenges of genuine fraternal social service.

Our hearts must be transformed into loving replicas of the Heart of Jesus, who reached out to the lost, lonely, little, least, and last in society. Thus, in contemporary situations, devotees of the Sacred Heart are called upon to concretize their love in face of challenging social realities. Today the Church sees that serving the poor and the disadvantaged involves intelligent effort to change unjust structures in society. Linking the Sacred Heart devotion with growth in heartfelt compassion for the needy would contribute significantly to the renewal of this traditional popular devotion, making it more responsive to contemporary social realities and the need, as Pope Francis notes, to become “a Church which is poor and for the poor” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 198).

# Eucharist and Mission

The feast of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr, is commemorated today. He was arrested and taken by soldiers to Rome to be thrown to lions. While on his arduous journey he managed to write seven letters to various local churches. Addressing the Christian Romans, he urges them not to seek his release. Professing his faith, Ignatius writes: "I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ." Ignatius saw that his mission was to become the Eucharist!

Saint John Paul II in *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (28) notes: "We cannot delude ourselves: by our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern for those in need we will be recognized as true followers of Christ (cf. Jn 13:35; Mt 25:31-46). This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged."

In his *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (20) the same pope notes that the Eucharist "increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today." He also quotes the poignant words of Saint John Chrysostom: "Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk, only then to neglect him outside where he is cold and ill-clad. He who said: 'This is my body' is the same who said: 'You saw me hungry and you gave me no food,' and 'Whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did also to me.' ... What good is it if the Eucharistic table is overloaded with golden chalices when your brother is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger and then with what is left you may adorn the altar as well." Mission means imitating the self-giving Christ in the Eucharist!

# Luke, Evangelist of Mission

Saint Luke can validly be called the “evangelist of mission.” Although all four Gospel writers, each in their own way, portray the mission of Christ and the Church, Luke provides the greatest amount of detail, both in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles, where one finds numerous accounts of the early Church in mission. Today’s Gospel provides several practical, concrete guidelines for mission engagement.

Luke notes that in Jesus’ public ministry he chooses seventy-two followers and sends them out on mission. We should conclude that mission is for *all* of Jesus’ disciples—*all* baptized Christians, not just the special twelve apostles. All mission and evangelization begins with God’s initiative, with Jesus’ choice. In addition, mission is not a personal or individual project; it is a community endeavor of the Church. We are asked to remember that “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” This was true in Jesus’ time and remains true today. We recognize the great task that faces us; we turn to the Lord in prayer, asking for additional harvesters.

Jesus gives several brief, yet direct, instructions: “Be on your way.” Do *not* delay! Remember that you will face many challenges; you will be like lambs in the midst of wolves. Jesus advises his missionaries to “travel light.” The missionary is to extend peace to everyone. Be humble and accept what is offered in terms of food and accommodations. Reach out to the sick and needy you encounter (recall Pope Francis’ advice to go to the margins, the peripheries, to the excluded in society). Make the announcement of Jesus’ *Kingdom message* your central emphasis; proclaim that “the reign of God near.” Indeed, as Christians we carry on the mission ministry that Jesus gave us. We appreciate Saint Luke for his beautiful panorama of authentic Christian mission; we also make it our firm commitment!

# Missionary Martyrs

## Witness to Faith

Today the Church commemorates six French Jesuit priests and two lay brothers who have come to be known as the “North American Martyrs.” This feast reminds us that the growth of the faith in most parts of the world began with the heroic witness of life by early missionaries—even to the point of giving their lives. These eight missionaries, who had come to North America to teach the Iroquois and Huron peoples about God, were martyred between the years 1642 and 1649 in present-day New York and Canada.

These faith-filled Gospel heralds, in general, were not welcomed by the Native Americans; they were viewed, not as men of God, but as French settlers who had often cheated them and invaded their valued hunting grounds. These missionaries first worked among the Huron tribes, achieving some acceptance as they tried to help them, nursing their sick and showing them new farming skills. They were able to begin teaching the Huron people about Jesus. Father de Brebeuf even wrote a simple catechism in the local language to teach the children. A pivotal problem was the hostilities between the Iroquois and Hurons. As the missionaries befriended the Hurons, the Iroquois viewed them as their enemies.

Over a period of eight years, these brave missionaries were brutally martyred. We know many details about their deaths and their mission experiences among the Native Americans because of the letters and journals they wrote. They were canonized by Pope Pius XI on June 29, 1930. Surely they would have meditated deeply on Jesus’ words in today’s Gospel that the Holy Spirit would accompany them in all their challenging missionary endeavors. We accept that, indeed, we are an *ecclesia martyrum*, a Church of martyrs and witnesses, both in past eras as well as in the present. We thank God for all who bravely—even heroically—witness their faith.

# Pope Francis Speaks on Mission

Catholics celebrate World Mission Sunday today; we carefully explore Pope Francis' message written for the occasion. In addition, we can profitably explore numerous profound insights on mission found in *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, Pope Francis' first apostolic exhortation. Here Francis is proposing a profound missionary renewal of the entire Church. He asserts that we need an "evangelizing Church that comes out of herself," **not** a Church that is "self-referential" and "lives within herself, of herself, for herself" (EG 27).

Pope Francis' writes: "I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.... All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion" (EG 27).

"Missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*.... We need to move 'from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry'" (EG 15). "I want to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has programmatic significance and important consequences.... Throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'" (EG 25).

A pivotal insight of Pope Francis is that "we are all missionary disciples" (EG 119); through baptism, "all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples" (EG 120). All Christians are "agents of evangelization." "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples'" (EG 120). Francis asserts: "Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor" (EG 109).



# Using Material Gifts for Mission

Money is useful—even necessary—for many good works, to promote human development, to foster missionary efforts, but when it becomes the dominant thing in life it destroys us and our relationships. This is the lesson that Pope Francis draws from his reflections on today’s Gospel parable about the rich man with an abundant harvest, seeking to preserve everything only for himself.

In this parable Jesus teaches us about “our relationship with wealth and money.” Of course, we should not demonize money; it can bring “many achievements to develop humanity.” But it is wrong to use it perversely. Pope Francis confirms Jesus’ warning: “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.” This temptation to “always want more” leads to idolatry. It leads us away from God’s Kingdom and mission.

Pope Francis links his Gospel reflection to the words of Saint Paul, who said, “Jesus Christ, who was rich, became poor in order to enrich us.” This is “God’s way,” the way of “humility, lowering ourselves to serve.” Since inordinate material attachments lead us away from God, Pope Francis adds that Jesus uses “strong, harsh words against attachment to money.” “You cannot serve two masters: you serve either God or money.” Jesus urges us “not to be worried because the Lord knows what we need.” Or again, he tells us to “trust in the Father, who makes the lilies of the field bloom and gives food to the birds of heaven.”

As Francis explains, when the man was wondering what to do with his abundant harvest, “he could have said: I’ll give to someone else to help him.” The Pope asks us to remember that “all the goods we have are given to us by the Lord to help the world go forward, to help humanity go forward, to help others.” Here one finds the true meaning of life: service of others!

## Saint John Paul II: Missionary Pope

The Catholic Church worldwide rejoiced as John Paul II, along with John XXIII, was canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014 in Rome. Catholic and secular media covered the event, emphasizing the many contributions of this 264th pope of the Catholic Church whose pontificate extended over 26 years (1978-2005).

One of the major emphases of John Paul II was his focus on the renewal of the Church in her missionary identity and commitment. When his mission encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) was published on December 7, 1990, Cardinal Daneels of Brussels wrote: “this document best exemplifies who this pope is; it is the fruit of his mission in every continent. There is nothing better to define his pontificate than to say: he is a missionary pope.”

In RM (1) the pope described his missionary commitment: “From the beginning of my pontificate I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the *urgency of missionary activity....*” John Paul II echoed his explicit pastoral choice in his Message for World Mission Sunday in 1981: “My trips to Latin America, Asia and Africa have an eminently missionary purpose.” Everywhere he went John Paul II emphasized a central point: “I wish to invite the Church to *renew her missionary commitment*” (RM 2).

Saint John Paul II continually asserted that mission is at the heart of the Church: “the Church here on earth is missionary by her very nature” (AG 2). He was deeply convinced that “missionary activity renews the Church.... *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*” (RM 2). Pope Francis said of John Paul II: “I think of him as ‘the great missionary of the Church’,” because he was “a man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere.”

# Joyful Evangelizers

Today's Gospel includes an interesting assertion; Jesus says: "Happy is that servant whom his master upon arrival finds him engaged in his mission" (Lk 12:43). Jesus is commending all missionaries who constantly engage in the task of evangelization; they are indeed blessed, happy, and fortunate. Jesus' words prompt us to recall that Pope Francis constantly affirms that missionary evangelization is to be a joyful undertaking; this theme echoes constantly through Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*). We listen to some of Francis' insights.

"The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.... With Christ joy is constantly born anew.... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy" (1). "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since 'no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord'" (3). Francis invites us all to "enter into this stream of joy" (5).

The Pope employs several creative expressions that challenge us to be joyful evangelizers. "An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral" (10). "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter" (6). Evangelizers are not to be "disillusioned pessimists, 'sourpusses'" (85). We must avoid a "tomb psychology ... [that can] transform Christians into mummies in a museum" (83). We do not accept the negativities of those who act like "prophets of doom" (84).

Pope Francis constantly encourages us: "Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization" (83)! Indeed, only *joyful evangelizers* are effective missionaries!

# The Fire of Mission

The first verse of today's Gospel captures Jesus' focus on his mission to bring "fire" upon the earth, to accomplish his God-given task of evangelization, the proclamation of his Father's Kingdom. This verse reminds one of the classical statement by theologian Emil Brunner in 1931: *"The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning."*

Brunner eloquently asserts that every Christian who receives the Word of God "receives along with it the duty of passing this Word on.... Mission work does not arise from any arrogance in the Christian Church; mission is its cause and its life....Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith.... Mission, Gospel preaching, is the spreading out of the fire which Christ has thrown upon the earth. He who does not propagate this fire shows that he is not burning. He who burns propagates the fire."

"This 'must' is both things—an urge and a command. An urge, because living faith feels God's purpose as its own. 'Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel,' says Paul. Necessity is laid upon him. But also, he ought to preach; with the gift he receives the obligation: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel.' Whether Christ's command was uttered just in these words, we do not know exactly. But there can be no doubt that He had sent out His disciples with the strict order to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world."

Jesus felt the urgency of his mission to bring "fire" upon this earth. He has shared this mission with every baptized Christian. As fire only genuinely exists when it is actually burning, we are only the Church and Jesus' authentic disciples only when we engage in mission. Are you ablaze? Have you caught Jesus' "Gospel Fire"?

# Reading the “Signs of the Times”

Jesus speaks about “reading signs” in today’s Gospel, interpreting life’s events in order to discern God’s will. Indeed, to more adequately respond to God’s call to mission, we need to astutely understand the diverse challenges and demands of evangelization in the modern world. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), Pope Francis exhorts all Christians to an “ever watchful scrutiny of the signs of the times” (51). Evangelizers must be attentive to “the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us together to read the signs of the times” (14).

For Francis, this task of examining current realities in the light of Christian faith is “a grave responsibility” (51). He proposes using “an evangelical discernment” which is “the approach of a missionary disciple” who is guided by “the light and strength of the Holy Spirit” (50). Christian faith demands “recognizing and discerning spirits” and ultimately “choosing movements of the spirit of good and rejecting those of the spirit of evil” (51).

Saint John XXIII, who summoned Vatican II, popularized the expression “signs of the times.” Here one finds the beginnings of a pivotal direction in theological methodology: linking the Gospel with the human family “with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses” (183). This approach is manifested in one of Francis’ quotes from Pope Paul VI: “We know that ‘evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the increasing interplay of the Gospel and of humanity’s concrete life, both social and personal’” (181).

This “signs of the times” method is found in some Council documents; the best known passage is from *Gaudium et Spes*: “The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (4). This key imperative remains a permanent task in missionary evangelization.

# Mercy: Heart of Mission

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable about a barren fig tree. The servant pleads with the master to be merciful and spare the tree; the master agrees. The scene reminds this writer of the words and deeds of Pope Francis, truly a "pope of mercy." His 2015 document, *Misericordiae Vultus* [MV] (*The Face of Mercy*) proclaimed an entire year of mercy. Francis says: "We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.... Mercy [is] the bridge that connects God and man" (2). We listen to some additional words that express the pope's profound vision!

Scripture clearly affirms that God is "the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation" (2 Cor 1:3). Our God is "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4). In Jesus of Nazareth, mercy has become living and visible. Jesus' entire life and "his person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously.... The signs he works, especially in the face of sinners, the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy" (8).

"Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers" (10). "The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel.... Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy" (12).

Mission means "living-in-mercy." Here are some suggestions to translate mercy into concrete deeds. Mercy addresses various types of human suffering; Christians are called to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Mercy is challenging; its demands are often inconvenient and unpredictable. Practicing mercy must spring from God's love in our hearts (Rm 5:5); it is not only giving things, but giving ourselves. Pray that you may imitate the same merciful love that Jesus—and Mary—consistently manifest.

# Authentic Humility Serves Evangelization

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus' parable about the Pharisee and the Publican tax collector; both went up to the temple to pray. Pharisees belonged to a Jewish sect that rigidly followed the law; they were often self-righteous and critical of others. Publicans were Jews who served the Roman authorities by collecting taxes, often enriching themselves in the process; they were considered public sinners and were treated with disdain.

Recall that Jesus told this parable to some "who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else." Jesus contrasts the attitudes of the two men. The Pharisee's prayer was a self-serving attempt to tell God how righteous he was; it reeked of pride and an inflated ego. The Publican pleaded: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner"; he recognized his guilt and his sins, begging God's forgiveness. Jesus concludes his parable, saying "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Pope Francis provides us with insights on genuine humility. "If God prefers humility it is not to debase us: humility is the necessary precondition for being lifted up again by Him, so as to experience the mercy that comes to fill our emptiness. The prayer of the arrogant does not reach God's heart, but the humility of the wretched opens it up. God has a predilection for the humble and, encountering a humble heart, He opens His own fully" (6-1-16). Again, "in Mary we see that humility is not a virtue of the weak but of the strong who do not have to treat others badly to feel important" (8-13-17).

Indeed, all evangelizers need the attitude of humble servants. Humility is a clear sign of the messenger's authenticity. Humility attracts; humility evangelizes. As Pope Francis noted in his homily at the beginning of his pontificate (3-19-13): "Let us never forget that authentic power is service"!

# Celebrating the Church's Apostles

After spending the entire night in prayer to His Father, Jesus selects twelve of his disciples, calling them “apostles.” The word *apostle* comes from the Greek *apostolein*, meaning “one who is sent out.” By choosing twelve, symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, Jesus indicates that he is establishing a “people,” a new People of God, the Church. Thus, the Church is “apostolic” and “missionary” right from its very origins. The Second Vatican Council emphasized that the Church is “missionary by her very nature” (*Ad Gentes 2*).

In the New Testament one finds two primary usages of the word *apostle*. The first specifically refers to the twelve chosen by Jesus; they form the foundation of the Church—with Jesus as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). The second meaning refers more generically to other individuals who are sent out to be messengers, ambassadors, and missionaries of Jesus Christ. In this *general sense* we can be called “apostles.” Indeed, through our Baptism, we are called and sent as genuine apostles of the risen Jesus.

Probably, the closest term to describe an *apostle* today would be the word *missionary*, which, incidentally, derives from the Latin verb *mittere*, meaning “to send.” A missionary is a follower of Christ who is sent out with the specific mission of announcing the Gospel. To employ the words of Pope Francis, we all are “missionary disciples,” followers of Jesus by whom we have been missioned.

In *Evangelii Gaudium* (120), Francis is eminently clear: “In virtue of their Baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples.... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Jesus Christ: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples.’” On this feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude we joyfully celebrate our missionary identity.



# Mission and Small Beginnings

Jesus was a “master-teacher.” This is shown in today’s two short “Kingdom” parables of the mustard seed and the yeast. Significant Church movements and mission initiatives often result from “the smallest of all seeds” and from “a bit of yeast.” The change begins “from within”: the seed is planted in the ground and the yeast is mixed into the flour.

Growth, change, and transformation in our lives as Christians begins with the small seed of faith, planted at our Baptism. As we cooperate with God’s grace, its transforming power and effects are seen. This fact has been verified in Church history. From a small band of ordinary disciples the Catholic Church has grown into a worldwide community of 1.6 billion people today. Beginning with one person, Saint Mother Teresa proceeded to pick up thousands of destitute people. She has expressed how God uses our littleness to achieve His mission.

Mother Teresa has said: “In this life we cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” “I am a little pencil in God’s hands. He does the thinking; he does the writing. He does everything and sometimes it is really hard, because it is a broken pencil and He has to sharpen it a little more.”

Mother Teresa’s patron saint was Therese of Lisieux. She, like many people, was attracted to “the little way” of Saint Therese, the Church’s Patroness of Mission and a Doctor of the Church. Her “spirituality” means seeking “holiness of life” in the ordinary aspects of everyday existence. This approach puts holiness within the reach of ordinary people like you and me. Both of these missionary saints are beautiful examples of how God uses “littleness” to achieve His mission. We ask ourselves: How can I live Jesus’ call to missionary discipleship in the simple, daily events of my life?

# God's Marvelous Providence

Saint Paul's words found in today's first reading from Romans are among the most well-known in the Bible: "For those who love God all things work together for good" (Rom 8:28). We need to read that verse frequently: **all things** (both good and bad, pleasant and difficult, including every person) can contribute to fulfilling God's loving plan for humanity.

It is interesting to note that this specific verse was chosen to be the "mission motto" of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. In short, this affirmation of Saint Paul provides a profound insight into the attitude of *all missionaries*—and of all Christians. In God's design **everything** we meet in life (no exceptions) can contribute to the unfolding of God's Kingdom. Because of our deep love of God, we are enabled to see God's hand in everything.

Christian mission is marvelously enhanced by this faith perspective. Often, many initiatives undertaken for evangelization do not meet with immediate success. Difficult challenges and apparent failures can open us up to a deeper relationship with Jesus and a more profound configuration to Christ. Our life—and mission itself—reflects this "paschal paradigm." In our daily lives, we struggle to move through darkness to light, through captivity to freedom, through suffering and brokenness to wholeness, from loneliness to communion, from sin to grace and new life.

We, as faith-filled Christians called to share Christ's mission, struggle to follow the path traced out for us by Christ in his paschal mystery. We reflect on the "divine reversal" that happens at Easter. What appeared as death's victory on Good Friday is reversed by Christ's triumph over the grave. In his paschal mystery Christ takes humanity's pride and sinfulness and changes them into an opportunity for grace. Adam's sin that brought death is reversed by Christ's humble obedience—even unto death. Marvel at the unfathomable love of God! This is "missionary faith"!

# Inseparable from God's Love

Today, as the Church completes Pope Francis' Extraordinary Missionary Month 2019, we hear Saint Paul's message to the Romans inviting us to contemplate the enduring, unfathomable love of God: "Nothing [even death or life] can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord." "If God is for us, who can be against us"? Note the profound certainty with which Paul speaks about Christ's enduring love.

Recalling God's rich love poured out on humanity ["God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all"], we are drawn into a deeper reflection on the very origin of the Church and her mission. *Ad Gentes* (2), the Vatican II document on missionary activity, asserts that the Trinitarian design of mission emerges from the "fount-like love" [*fontalis amor*] of our Trinitarian God. God is truly a "fountain of love," an "endless source of charity," flowing out through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We owe our very existence to God's "surpassing and merciful kindness." He has "graciously called us to share with Him His life and His glory," which he "does not cease to pour out still" through "His divine goodness" (AG 2). Here we find a deep theology of mission: all is rooted in God's love, nothing more and nothing less. Mission is, at heart, relishing God's love and then making God's love visible through concrete words and deeds.

Saint Paul also asserts (2 Cor 5:14) that "the love of Christ impels us" [*Caritas Christi urget nos*]. We engage in missionary evangelization, not because of external mandates; our mission motivation flows authentically out of the Trinitarian love we have received in Baptism. Mission is, at heart, an overflow of God's life of love from deep within our souls. Because we have encountered and been transformed by God's love; we become "missionaries of God's love"!

# About the Author...

**Father James H. Kroeger**, a Maryknoll Missioner, born in Wisconsin, USA on December 4, 1945, was ordained a priest on May 17, 1975. He has served mission in Asia (Philippines and Bangladesh) since his 1970 arrival in the Orient, working in parishes and serving mostly in the education-formation apostolate of seminarians, religious, catechists, and lay leaders.

Father Kroeger holds both licentiate and doctorate degrees in Missiology (Mission Theology) from the Gregorian University in Rome. Currently he teaches Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and “Asian Theology” at the Loyola School of Theology (Ateneo de Manila); he is a regular professor at the East Asian Pastoral Institute and at the Mother of Life Catechetical Center. He served as founding-president of the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists (PACM); he is an advisor to the FABC Office of Evangelization and the Philippine Bishops’ (CBCP) Commission on Mission. Kroeger also presents short courses and seminars to a wide variety of Catholic, ecumenical, and interfaith groups.

He has produced numerous theological-missiological-catechetical materials. His most recent books include: *Exploring the Priesthood with Pope Francis* (ST PAULS: 2017); *Asia’s Dynamic Local Churches* (Claretian and Jesuit Communications: 2014); *Becoming Missionary Disciples* (PMS – Manila: 2014); *Walking in the Light of Faith* (ST PAULS: 2014); *The Gift of Mission* (Orbis Books: 2013); *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones* (ST PAULS: 2012); *Exploring the Treasures of Vatican II* (Claretian and Jesuit Communications: 2011); and, *Once Upon a Time in Asia: Stories of Harmony and Peace* [ten translations, various publishers and dates]. He may be contacted at: [jhkroeger@gmail.com](mailto:jhkroeger@gmail.com)

# MISSION NARRATIVES



# Mission in the Mandate of Jesus



**Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS**

With baskets tied around their head, infants wrapped around their young mother's body, the indigenous people (IP) of Mindoro, the Mangyans, are often seen walking in single file in the market or other public places, begging for food. In the early years of our mission in Mindoro, they used to come knocking at the door of our convent; the sisters welcomed and cared for them.

When "Angels' Home," a house for less-privileged children and young girls, was built, the sisters decided to take in some indigenous children and young people. In Angels' Home, their basic needs are provided. They are sent to good schools, which hone their natural gifts. More importantly, they are formed in human and Christian values. A sister is tasked to guide them, to be with them as they do their tasks in the house, fulfill their duties as students and relate with other young people in the community. Aside from this, the sisters also nurture their faith through catechesis, prayer and accompaniment. Recently, we have organized feeding programs.

Our mission among the Mangyans cannot but remind me of this Gospel scene: "Jesus rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist" (Jn 13:4-5). This Gospel scene speaks of our mission with and among the Mangyans. Yes, their feet are often caked with mud and cracked by the heat of the soil which they tread barefoot. Our mission, however, is not to literally wash the dirt off their travel-worn feet, but as Jesus did, to bend, wash their feet and look them in the eyes as our brethren. We express in our utmost capacity the desire to welcome them and help them discover their gifts just waiting to bloom in God's merciful and loving hands.

The challenge, on the other hand, is to encourage them to give back to their own communities and make full use of their gifts. Many of those who have lived with us lack perseverance and dreams for a better life. Despite this, we continue to hope that Jesus will do his work through our hearts and our hands, because our mission is not to ascertain the success of our efforts, but to place in God's hands our whole selves, allowing Him to bless us, to break us and to be shared continually for the good of His Kingdom.

Patience and perseverance in this mission are rewarded by the joy we feel in serving God's mission as well as by witnessing how their gifts bloom and give joy to other people around them.

---

**Sister Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS**, is a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament involved in the apostolate among the Mangyans.

---

*“Our mission among the Mangyans cannot but remind me of this Gospel scene: ‘Jesus rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist’.”*

**(Jn 13: 4-5)**

---

# God's Commissioning



**Rico Gerardo Jazmin, SVD**

I do believe that my calling started even before I was born. I cannot help but compare myself and my calling to that of the great chosen leaders in the Old Testament called by God to lead his people, like Samuel, Isaiah and Moses and many more. God has chosen them.

At the age of twelve slowly God started to concretize my vocation to the religious, missionary and priestly life. In June of 1978, finally I entered and joined the first year high school batch of 48 students in Christ the King Mission Seminary. After fourteen years in formation, only two of us from the original class got ordained to the priesthood in 1991 and 1993 respectively. We're not the best, but we know that in God's eyes we were the most precious.

Right after my formation and theological studies I was sent to Argentina, my first foreign mission assignment. It was another chapter in my life encountering myself in another context and reality. One very important lesson and experience I learned during my formation, and carrying it out throughout my life is: remain OPEN to the HOLY SPIRIT in order to be led by Him wherever and to whatever place and direction He wants me to go.

In November 1992, I arrived in Misiones, Argentina. I found and encountered many new things different to what were then familiar to me. But, what made me feel so secure in going to this place was that I knew that before I arrived, God was already there. And, I never felt alone in the mission because I had with me my brothers, fellow Divine Word Missionaries, sharing together and fulfilling God's mission: *the proclamation of God's Good News*. As a missionary let me share with you my personal realizations about mission.

**MISSION** is going out of *my personal boundaries*. I realized that I had to leave many things in my life before going beyond the physical boundaries (from one place to another). I had to empty my whole self in order to assume the new realities in life. I had to accept that I was




different from them, and that my mission is to share my own *personal experience and testimony* of my own *personal* God, a God who was incarnated, lived among us, died and resurrected to tell that God has never forgotten his own people.


**MISSION** is to have the *habit of asking questions*. I was advised by one of my SVD Filipino confreres working at that time in Argentina that I must always *ask questions*. Children always ask questions of their parents; these are signs of humility, an interest to learn and to be filled with knowledge and wisdom. Being new in mission, I knew that there were so many things that I must learn. I was born as a Filipino, not as an Argentinian, with a different culture and history. Therefore, I humbly accepted that there were many things in their life as Argentinians that I must learn in order to be able to walk with them on their journey. In other words, mission is none other than *incarnating my faith* in a specific place and culture.

---

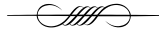
**Father Rico Gerardo Jazmin, SVD**, has worked in Argentina, later in Spain, and then in Philippines SVD Central Province; he was the former PMS Diocesan Director of the Diocese of Sorsogon.

..........

*“One very important lesson and experience I learned during my formation, and carrying it out throughout my life is: remain OPEN to the HOLY SPIRIT in order to be led by Him wherever and to whatever place and direction He wants me to go.”*

..........

# Our Journey in Dialogue



**Carlos V. Reyes**

I was assigned as Minister for Ecumenism and Interfaith Affairs for the Archdiocese of Manila by the late and great Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, just a few years after my ordination to the priesthood. I did not have a clue what to do. I considered myself as one of the most dogmatic and probably unyielding members of the clergy, when it comes to matters of the Faith, given my background. I was a former member of the Neo-Catechumenal Movement and I hold a licentiate in Patristic Theology. The Cardinal, however, wanted a Catholic priest to dialogue with our Christian sisters and brothers and friends who are members of other faith traditions. He wanted that Catholic priest to be truly Catholic because it is presupposed by dialogue. Catholics must bring themselves and their Catholic Faith and Traditions into the universal sphere of dialogue. In retrospect, the Cardinal was right.

I stumbled my way into dialogue, reading books, publications and Church documents while engaging in dialogue at the same time. I must admit that initially, I had my prejudices and biases, which I was trying to hide or hopefully suppress. I still felt that I was the wrong man for the job [I considered my assignment as a job then]. Everything was new and foreign: the hijabs, Temples and Mosques, the headgears and the food. My co-religionists, my Catholic collaborators, were talking strangely and I simply was not getting into it. My conversion, so to speak, began when in collaboration with the Communications Foundation for Asia, we conducted a Muslim-Christian Youth Camp in Manila. The participants were high school students from the Ramon Avanceña High School near the Golden Mosque and the Basilica of the Black Nazarene.

The school population was a fifty-fifty mix of Muslim and Christian students, and there were the unavoidable tensions between them. The participants were given training and formation, not only in dialogue, but also in the different expressions of mass media, like arts and craft, music, dance, photography and movie making. At the end of the session, the young people presented their longings for peace

and friendship through the various media. One group presented their output through modern dance and I witnessed the high school Muslim girls doing modern dance in the same manner as our high school Christian girls. I realized then that our Muslim friends are also human beings like me! They have mothers and fathers, they laugh and cry, they love and hate, they experience joy and sorrow, much like us. We are human beings. We share the same clod of humanity, created in the image and likeness of God. The discovery of that secret, a secret that is hiding in plain sight, opened up for me the door of dialogue. We are human beings after all!

With our Christian collaborators, we extended our hands in friendship on all levels. We were engaged in the “dialogue of life” where we made friends with everyone. We shared in their joys and their sorrows, in their laughter and tears. We engaged ourselves in the “dialogue of action,” especially during times of calamities and disasters. We engaged ourselves in the “dialogue of theological exchange,” where we conducted seminars on matters of each one’s faith and beliefs. We “dialogue of religious experience” when we came together as spiritual persons who pray, each according to his or her own belief and religious tradition.

We are fortunate that God, through the Holy Spirit, has inspired specific groups and persons to immerse themselves in interreligious dialogue. We make mention of the Focolare Movement, the Peacemakers’ Circle, the University of Santo Tomas, the Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippine Women’s University and the De la Salle University.

A United Nations Resolution mandating all members to observe the United Nations’ Harmony Week during the first week of February has helped create in 2012 the Uniharmony Partners Manila, an interfaith umbrella group of religious men and women of dialogue in Metro Manila. Its partners now include some twenty-five or more organizations that are committed to dialogue. We are looking for more ways to go forward in dialogue by combining each other’s resources, talents and genius.

At the start of my ministry, I strived to comprehend the Church’s understanding and teaching regarding dialogue. More than a decade since I became minister, I think that the deep meaning of dialogue, as understood by the Church, is at last being revealed to me, thanks to

my engagement in dialogue and the personal friendships that I have established with friends from the various faith traditions. While the prevailing opinion is that *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican II would be the basic document on dialogue, I think that the foundational Church document regarding dialogue is *Gaudium et Spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*. Its opening lines are: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of people. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every person. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds” (GS 1).

These opening words are indeed words of dialogue. It is through this spirit that the Church opens herself to dialogue with all the men and women of this day and age and in the days to come. The Second Vatican Council is an Ecumenical Council like no other; its spirit is different. Its theological approach is conditioned by its Universal, thereby Catholic, pastoral approach. This is a departure from the legislative-judicial language of some Councils that went before it.

This pastoral approach is reflected in the expanded the way that the Church sees herself as was expounded in *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. It notes: “All people are called to be part of this catholic unity of the people of God, which in promoting universal peace, presages it. And there belong to or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of humanity, for all people are called by the grace of God to salvation” (LG 13).

All people are called to be part of the universal unity of the people of God. There are those who belong to the Church in various ways. The document did not make a listing of the various ways. In addition, there are those who are related to the Church in various ways. Again, the document did not specify the various ways. Indeed, the ways of relating and belonging to the Church are various and open-ended. The Spirit of God is the one who provides ways of relating and belonging. It is not an accident that we see ourselves as Catholic Christians.

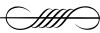
We must remember that the word “catholic” means “universal.” A religion that sees itself as Catholic must also see itself as all inclusive and not at all exclusive. The Kingdom of God is still more extensive than the Church, which is the initial budding forth of the Kingdom, as it strains toward the completed Kingdom. To be Catholic is to be in dialogue with the whole of humanity because Jesus, the Founder of the Church, is the dialogue of God the Father with humanity.

Given these premises, I see Intra-faith Dialogue as a challenge. There are very few proponents of dialogue within the Catholic Church. Interreligious (or Interfaith) dialogue must be taught and inculcated in Catholic communities even as some Catholic practitioners engage in dialogue with men and women of other faith traditions. Dialogue is part and parcel of the Church’s evangelizing effort. To be Catholic is to be in dialogue.

---

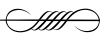
**Father Carlos V. Reyes** is presently the minister of the Ministry of Ecumenism and Interfaith Affairs of the Archdiocese of Manila.

---



*“We are human beings. We share the same clod of humanity, created in the image and likeness of God.”*

---



# Mission to the Emotionally and Spiritually Wounded



**Jimmy Leornas**

Gathered in a circle in a dimly lit mini-hall, silent whimpers and crying of anguish can be heard. Emotions are high. Fourteen-year-old Anna was beginning to share her story. Looking at me and her classmates, tears were starting to roll from her big round eyes. She said how confused she was since both her mother and father had their respective families already. And, she was living with her grandparents on her mother's side. She related how it pained her much that her Lolo died a year before. Her voice cracking, she expressed her fear of also losing her Lola, since she was not accepted by the respective families of her mother and father. Looking straight into my eyes, she asked me, "Sir, *inianak lang po ba ako?*" ["Sir, was I just sired?"]. Tears began to swell in my eyes as I bit my lip to control my emotions. I mustered just enough words to reply, "No matter what, Jesus still loves you."

That was a long time ago, but it galvanized me to become full-time in this field of apostolate or shall we say a missionary work for family, life and faith. We are on the road practically daily all these years giving seminars, retreats and recollections to Catholic, private and public schools, parishes, organizations, communities, and even to some companies. From far-flung places in Mindanao to the poverty stricken areas of the Visayas; from the heavy trafficked areas of Metro Manila and to the mountainous areas of the North; from the beautiful auditorium of well-known private schools to the decrepit small rooms of poor schools; from a large parish hall to the *barangay* chapel, we can say: "we've been there." We have heard their struggles to keep family and life together as we heard of people already giving up on each other. What is worse is when they start to give up their faith.

This is a time of rapid and intense changes that can be distinctly noticed nowadays, especially in the behavior and values of people. It is a time when truth is relative, values are undermined, families are

becoming dysfunctional and even disintegrating, and the Church is in confusion as authentic faith is abandoned. Despite the technological advancement in communication, there is a backward trend in human personal communication. There is a lack of love and a lack of the sense of sin. Life has become cheaper. Suicidal tendencies are on the rise, especially among the young. People are becoming more materialistic. And, as a way to escape, people are resorting to and becoming more hooked to online gaming, technology, social media and other addictions.

As a response, we developed a wide range of topics that address the needs of the family, individuals, and the young people of this time; examples are: valuing family and life, the effects of media and technology, addiction to social media, servant leadership training, parenting topics, retreats and recollections, spiritual warfare, the sanctity of marriage, and many more.

This is the time that the “other poor” in our society have to be cared for: *the emotionally wounded and confused people*, especially the young. Indeed, mission today includes an urgent call to share the gift of faith, proclaim the gospel of life, and uphold and defend the value of the family.

---

**Jimmy Leornas** is a husband and a father; he is the head of Family Life International-Philippines. He may be contacted at: famlifephils@gmail.com

---

*“Indeed, mission today includes an urgent call to share the gift of faith, proclaim the gospel of life, and uphold and defend the value of the family.”*

---

# Transformative Encounters Beyond Borders



**Rosa Angelica Libron, SSPS**

I first set foot on Korean soil as a missionary in August 1996. The next eighteen years brought me to the peripheries of the eleventh largest economy in the world. Among the people I shared life and mission with were those living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH), as well as the labor and marriage migrants from developing countries in Asia.

I lived 24/7 in a shelter for Korean men who were in advanced stages of HIV infection. Under the Seoul Archdiocese, we, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, were providing them with proper nutrition, comfortable accommodations, and loving care. However, what they seemed to value most was being accepted and belonging. One resident shared with me: “Before we even have our physical death, we already have died twice: first, when we declared being gay, our families disowned us; second, when we disclosed our HIV status, friends and co-workers broke ties with us. You come from another country; you are actually a stranger to us, but now you have become our friends and family.” Little did that friend know that they had first given me a home in Korea and their determination to live always made my heart burn not only for mission, but with greater faith in God who heals and transforms.

Receiving a positive HIV diagnosis can be life-changing. Getting over the shock can take much time and energy. Oftentimes, I was edified by the efforts of my PLWH-friends to overcome their feelings of anger, fear, shame or regret, and then with renewed hope, move forward with life.

After one year of service in the shelter, I was tasked to open a center that would respond beyond basic needs and medical care, one that would empower our PLWH-friends towards fuller lives and reintegration into society. We were to reach out to at least a hundred, most especially those who were withdrawn and living alone in Seoul and neighboring cities. One bonding program was the weekly



recreation like sports, movies and visits to a park or museum that was capped off with a meal at a restaurant. Organizing each outing for around twenty people was tedious, but the transformation in our PLWH-friends, from isolation to establishing new friendships, from depression to smiling faces and spontaneous laughter, never failed to invigorate me. Eventually, the community grew.

Although not all were Catholics, we had monthly Masses where the gift of life was celebrated and those with birthdays were honored. Unforgettable is the man who cried because it was his first time to blow birthday candles. From the experience of love-in-community, others asked to be baptized and accompanied in their faith journey. As support to start anew, scholarships to alternative professions, as well as assistance to find jobs were given. Slowly yet so meaningfully, signs of new life were manifested in the mutual sharing and empowerment among PLWH-friends. Indeed, in God's mission, His grace transforms every encounter where each individual is valued regardless of sexual orientation, religion, culture, or health status.

---

**Sister Rosa Angelica Libron, SSpS**, served in South Korea for eighteen years (1996-2014) in leadership, formation, counselling, and social work.

---

*“Organizing each outing for around twenty people was tedious, but the transformation in our PLWH-friends, from isolation to establishing new friendships, from depression to smiling faces and spontaneous laughter, never failed to invigorate me.”*

---

# An Unexpected Journey



## Demi Rey Kel Andoy

It started with a simple desire to go on mission many years ago. The excitement of learning a different culture, language and even encounter other people is a great avenue to appreciate more God's wide vineyard. God's timing was not always there every time I asked, prayed and discerned over the years. I was often so fast to process things, thinking that God is still leading me to where I am as of the moment, not outside the country. Thirst and excitement are always there, but the hope that it would happen appeared fading every single minute.

Last February 20, 2019 someone called me, telling about mission opportunities that I should pray about. I was about to board the aircraft on my way to Iloilo when I received a phone call. My heart was beating so fast after that phone conversation. A brother in our community told me that I would be out for short mission in Myanmar; there were no specific details but just assurance of trust and prayers. Hearing the news somehow gave me some goose-bumps and quietly surprised me. I could not imagine myself to be on mission outside the Philippines in that very urgent situation, but with God's grace I was able to slowly absorb the gift of being sent! Praise God for that!

I thought that what I am doing in my mission area would nearly be the same in Myanmar—until such time my leaders stated the objectives and specific details. Everything was different and far away from what I was thinking. Our mission was purely teaching in their Summer English Program offered by the Diocese of Loikaw. I was a little surprised, but at the back of my mind I was also happy, knowing that maybe this way I could practice my teaching profession. I graduated college with a Bachelor of Secondary Education. My reaction at that moment was somehow to refresh my mind with my earlier learning and quickly apply it on this mission. In a short span of time, I had enough preparation and quite a lot of extra baggage that bothered me: my family, my loved ones and, of course, the people I was serving with. Well, two months might be short time, but I had high hopes.

More than my longing to see and be with them, there was the far greater plan of God ahead of me on this mission, especially the very thing I was praying for.

Indeed, everything came as a surprise! We arrived in Yangon and talked only to a few people who could understand and communicate with us. So, the first few hours were purely introduction and familiarization with people. Thank God for the generosity and willingness of Father Nene who accompanied us and brought us to our area of assignment. I could not imagine myself without someone guiding us in a foreign place. My prayer then was for God's constant presence and assurance that He would always be at our side every single day of our mission. My first week experience was tough because of the way we communicated with our students in English; everything had to be translated into their local language. Oh well, I thought, that would take a lot of time! I thought that if this would always be the case, somehow two months would never be enough for them to respond to us using the same medium. Even simple greetings were so hard to achieve.

I thought that maybe we needed some other way to relate to them. Lo and behold, I realized that I was too conscious of teaching the lessons I had prepared for them, rather than seeking an opportunity to build their self-confidence. I was led to a realization about how Jesus did his ministry. He did not say a lot to start with; he was introducing a sincere and genuine friendship anchored in the very truth about God's love for humanity. So I started all over with the pure intention of appreciating their capacity to learn and speak the language slowly. It became a daily encounter of fun and eagerness to discover potentials according to their own pace. Patience and sympathy were not just virtues, but a hope that what we planted for a short time would soon grow and develop into something good and valuable for them.

Truly, part of the learning process is being able to journey with them every single moment of the process and disregard one's personal high expectations. They wanted to learn a lesson; however, the ability to overcome fears and instill inspiration in their minds began to motivate us in teaching every day. Ending the Summer Class was indeed a joy at seeing one's students trying to communicate in English in spite of all the difficulties (accents, proper pronunciation, etc.). What is important is that they achieve the first

step in learning: being confident and motivated to know and learn more of the English language.

What I learned from this experience is that God's mission is not just about giving formation about our Christian identity. Sometimes it is about building up one's character and being ready to learn more of the other's Christian identity. Beyond that simple desire to go to mission overseas, I was suddenly overwhelmed and even consumed with fears. But, God's grace alleviated the fear within me and made me certain that I am really called for this. I felt anxious along the way, but still God's undying love validates my intention to be and bring Christ wherever I am. In our unexpected journeys, God is always expecting us to love and to trust Him in the process!

---

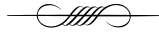
**Demi Rey Kel Andoy**, a lay missionary of Couples For Christ—Youth For Christ, is from Surigao del Norte and is currently assigned in the Western Visayas Region.

---

*“Truly, part of the learning process is being able to journey with them every single moment of the process and disregard one's personal high expectations. They wanted to learn a lesson; however, the ability to overcome fears and instill inspiration in their minds began to motivate us in teaching every day.”*

---

# *Maximum Illud* Centennial



**James H. Kroeger, MM**

The flowering of the Church’s vision of her mission of evangelization in the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is preceded by decades of continuous mission experience and reflection. This cumulative “wisdom” coalesces into the Church’s vision on a particular subject; thus, for the Church’s “mission perspectives” in the first half of the twentieth century one can look to five papal encyclicals: *Maximum Illud* (1919), *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926), *Evangelii Praecones* (1951), *Fidei Donum* (1957), and *Princeps Pastorum* (1959). Following Vatican II and *Ad Gentes* (1965), one must explore *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), *Redemptoris Missio* (2000), and *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013).

The Church has continued to reflect on her missionary identity ever since Jesus told his disciples: “As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you” (John 20:21). The Papal mission documents, important sources of mission reflection, are papal circulars dealing with missionary themes, whatever their exact title may be. Another source of mission reflection in the first half of the twentieth century would necessarily include a treatment of major schools of mission thought (Belgian, French, Spanish), as well as important theologians such as: Robert Streit, Joseph Schmidlin, Pierre Charles, Andre Glorieux, Henri de Lubac, and Thomas Ohm.

Papal mission writings often reflect the particular period of history in which they appeared—both in their theology and current world events. This very short overview presentation seeks only to present some pivotal insights of *Maximum Illud*, as its centenary is recalled—particularly by the Extraordinary Missionary Month proclaimed by Pope Francis for October 2019.

**Pivotal Encyclical.** The first great missionary document of modern times, *Maximum Illud* (“Spreading the Catholic Faith”), was issued by Pope Benedict XV on November 30, 1919. This

document broke a forty-year silence from the papacy in regard to a missionary encyclical. It has been called the *magna carta* of modern missions, and its directives have had far-reaching ramifications. The importance of this encyclical is shown by the fact that all subsequent missionary encyclicals quote *Maximum Illud*.

The context in which the document was written is significant. The First World War (1914-1918) had just ended; it had brought great destruction on several levels—including the Church’s missionary endeavors. The encyclical sought to revive missionary initiatives affected by the catastrophe of the war. In addition, the post-war period saw significant development in the world of social communications.

Benedict XV stated two purposes for his letter: encourage missionary leadership and recommend mission methods. Speaking to those directly involved in mission, the pope noted that heads of missions must act with “prudence and charity,” always seeking to expand mission efforts. They should be open to accept the help of various apostles, even those who do not belong to their religious order. The work of religious women needs recognition and promotion.

Missionaries are encouraged to grow in “sanctity of life,” following “the example of Christ our Lord and of the Apostles.” They should frequently recall “the lofty and splendid character” of their vocation. The pope recognizes “the stupendous hardships our missionaries have undergone in extending the Faith.” He also has strong words that direct the missionary to avoid “serving the interests of his homeland”; “the true missionary is always aware that he is not working as an agent of his country, but as an ambassador of Christ.” Missionaries must have careful and profound training, especially in “the science of missiology”; they “should not be content with a smattering of the language, but should be able to speak it readily and competently.”

**Special Emphasis.** A pivotal emphasis of *Maximum Illud* is the development of the indigenous clergy; there must be “special concern to secure and train local candidates for the sacred ministry.” Benedict XV asserts: “In this policy lies the greatest hope

of the new churches.” Why? “For the local priest, one with his people by birth, by nature, by his sympathies and his aspirations, is remarkably effective in appealing to their mentality and thus attracting them to the Faith.”

The local clergy are to be “well trained and well prepared.” They are “not to be trained merely to perform the humbler duties of the ministry, acting as the assistants of foreign priests.” Every effort must be taken to avoid having “a local clergy that is of inferior quality.” Mission superiors should have the founding of seminaries as a main concern.

The encyclical invites the entire Church to assist the missions through prayer, personnel, and finances. The diverse works of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith deserve support and cooperation. The pope’s “mission theology” would reflect that of the times; his vision would be based on the traditional conviction *extra ecclesia, nulla salus*. Benedict XV also commends the Church’s missionary efforts to “the great Mother of God, the Queen of Apostles.”

**Prominent Themes.** This final section is but a modest presentation of selected pivotal topics arising from an appreciation of the pre-Vatican II papal mission teaching. A list of the ten most notable themes can be presented; they are arranged according to the prominence they receive. Papal emphasis is given to the following items: (1) the missionary nature of the Church; (2) the purpose of the missions; (3) the person of the missionary; (4) local Churches and local clergy; (5) role of the pope and bishops; (6) the role of mission superiors; (7) types of mission work; (8) missionary virtues; (9) the pontifical mission aid societies; and, (10) laity in mission.

Viewed from an evolutionary viewpoint, one could assert that the decree of Vatican II on the Church’s missionary activity, *Ad Gentes*, is in many respects a logical consequence of earlier missionary documents. Some few examples, found both in the pre-Vatican II papal mission teaching as well as in *Ad Gentes*, can illustrate this point. The goal of establishing the Church is a primary task of mission (AG 5) and this is often expressed in

terms of “planting of the Church” (AG 6, 19). The obligations of the missionary are outlined, especially the call to holiness (AG 23-27). Missionary cooperation is essential for a fruitful outcome of diverse mission endeavors (AG 35-41). Lay participation in mission is promoted (AG 41).

The Church today continues to struggle to integrate both the papal mission wisdom of early encyclicals like *Maximum Illud*, the insights of Vatican II, and important post-conciliar documents such as *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI (1975), *Redemptoris Missio* of John Paul II (2000), and *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis (2013). The Church fervently prays: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus!*

---

**James H. Kroeger** is a Maryknoll Missionary who has served in the Philippines since 1970. His most recently published book is *Exploring the Priesthood with Pope Francis* (ST PAULS, 2017).

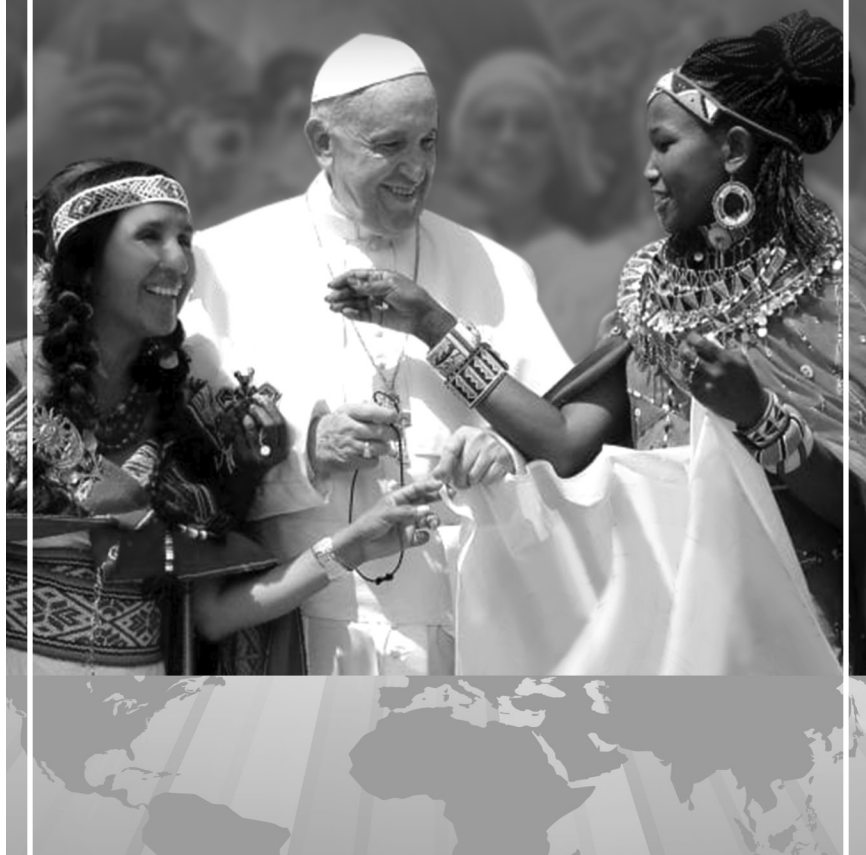
---

*“Missionaries are encouraged to grow in ‘sanctity of life,’ following ‘the example of Christ our Lord and of the Apostles.’ They should frequently recall ‘the lofty and splendid character’ of their vocation.”*

---



# REPORTS



# PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES - PHILIPPINES

## 2018 World Mission Sunday Collection March 01, 2018 - February 28, 2019

### I. ARCHDIOCESES

1	CACERES	261,500.00
2	CAGAYAN DE ORO	722,345.50
3	CAPIZ	192,333.50
4	CEBU	805,995.06
5	COTABATO	153,753.50
6	DAVAO	648,059.15
7	JARO	667,032.19
8	LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN	562,770.00
9	LIPA	704,808.81
10	MANILA	4,319,323.44
11	NUEVA SEGOVIA	281,125.91
12	OZAMIS	91,159.00
13	PALO	223,008.92
14	SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA	482,003.45
15	TUGUEGARAO	348,485.50
16	ZAMBOANGA	308,548.50

### II. DIOCESES

1	ALAMINOS	157,375.00
2	ANTIPOLO	784,714.56
3	BACOLOD	178,662.40
4	BAGUIO	694,701.32
5	BALANGA	113,566.50
6	BANGUED	99,095.00
7	BAYOMBONG	380,464.30

8	BOAC	41,226.00
9	BORONGAN	74,374.75
10	BUTUAN	188,694.00
11	CABANATUAN	1,481,780.65
12	CALBAYOG	65,024.00
13	CATARMAN	53,896.30
14	CUBAO	1,333,771.87
15	DAET	125,000.00
16	DIGOS	392,244.60
17	DIPOLOG	266,878.35
18	DUMAGUETE	244,293.70
19	GUMACA	189,084.60
20	IBA	276,934.80
21	ILAGAN	41,424.00
22	ILIGAN	87,772.00
23	IMUS	433,610.59
24	IPIL	45,000.00
25	KABANKALAN	93,540.36
26	KALIBO	50,933.45
27	KALOOKAN	249,264.50
28	KIDAPAWAN	72,798.00
29	LAOAG	97,435.00
30	LEGAZPI	221,701.70
31	LIBMANAN	60,807.25
32	LUCENA	1,163,141.80
33	MAASIN	181,431.40

34	MALAYBALAY	35,587.03
35	MALOLOS	653,584.05
36	MARBEL	233,883.05
37	MASBATE	101,525.25
38	MATI	26,004.00
39	MILITARY DIOCESE	20,000.00
40	NAVAL	20,613.75
41	NOVALICHES	271,003.50
42	PAGADIAN	52,986.84
43	PARAÑAQUE	1,111,306.05
44	PASIG	462,373.30
45	ROMBLON	
46	SAN CARLOS, NEG. OCC.	199,640.50
47	SAN FERNANDO, LA UNION	100,328.17
48	SAN JOSE, ANTIQUE	166,476.10
49	SAN JOSE, NUEVA ECIJA	49,224.50
50	SAN PABLO	758,164.00
51	SORSOGON	117,504.08
52	SURIGAO	51,704.75
53	TAGBILARAN	117,931.08
54	TAGUM	121,494.50
55	TALIBON	182,121.00
56	TANDAG	40,867.75
57	TARLAC	300,000.00
58	URDANETA	116,562.34
59	VIRAC	48,794.50
<b>III. PRELATURES</b>		
1	BASILAN	100,813.65
2	BATANES	
3	INFANTA	286,531.40
4	MARAWI	
<b>IV. APOSTOLIC VICARIATE</b>		
1	BONTOC-LAGAWÉ	172,503.50

2	CALAPAN	334,463.45
3	JOLO	27,000.00
4	PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN	230,220.15
5	SAN JOSE, OCC.MINDORO	181,422.13
6	TABUK	65,754.78
7	TAYTAY, PALAWAN	83,962.00

**2018 TOTAL COLLECTIONS**

**27,555,246.33**

**LATE/ADDITIONAL REMITTANCE**

1	ANTIPOLO	22,718.70
2	BORONGAN	159,929.00
3	BONTOC-LAGAWÉ	104,376.00
4	CEBU	597,899.29
5	CUBAO	148,760.25
6	COTABATO	102,227.50
7	DIGOS	13,999.00
8	KALOOKAN	155,789.60
9	LIPA	28,309.00
10	ILAGAN	106,809.55
11	MANILA	75,005.58
12	MALOLOS	10,000.00
13	MATI	31,773.89
14	NOVALICHES	11,530.00
15	PARAÑAQUE	1,002,644.95
16	PASIG	113,730.00
17	TABUK	102,194.92
18	TAYTAY, PALAWAN	150,927.00

**2017 TOTAL LATE COLLECTIONS**

**2,938,624.23**

**2018 GRAND TOTAL COLLECTIONS**

**PhP 30,493,870.56**

**APPROVED PROJECTS**  
 Subsidized by PMS Philippines  
**SOCIETY FOR THE**  
**PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH**  
 March 01, 2018 - February 28, 2019

ECCLESIASTICAL TERRITORY		PROJECT	AMOUNT (USD)
1	Diocese of Alaminos	*Formation programs for the Carmelite Sisters	\$ 151.35
2	Diocese of Baguio	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 18,000.00
3	Apostolic Vicariate of Bontoc-Lagawe	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 31,000.00
		*Catechists' Subsidy	\$ 10,000.00
		*Construction of Chapel in Salamague	\$ 10,000.00
		*Construction of Chapel in Bangar	\$ 8,000.00
4	Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 30,000.00
5	Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 30,000.00
		*Catechists' Subsidy	\$ 7,000.00
6	Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 26,000.00
		*Catechists' Subsidy	\$ 24,500.00
		*Construction of Bahay- Pari Clergy Home and Retirement House	\$ 40,000.00
7	Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 30,000.00
		*Catechists' Subsidy	\$ 24,000.00
		*Reconstruction of Priests' House in Holy Cross Parish, Sta. Cruz	\$ 12,000.00
		*Reconstruction of San Isidro Labrador Formation Center in San Jose	\$ 13,000.00
		*Purchase of a vehicle for St. Joseph Parish in Pag- Asa, Sablayan	\$ 10,000.00
8	Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 31,000.00
		*Construction of a Priest House for the Holy Family Catholic Mission at Cudal, Tabuk City	\$ 20,000.00
		*Reconstruction of St. Joseph Church at Dagupan Centro, Tabuk City	\$ 20,000.00
9	Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay	*Ordinary Subsidy	\$ 27,000.00
		*Catechists' Subsidy	\$ 7,000.00
		*Construction of Presbytery for St. John the Baptist Parish at Poblacion, Dumaran	\$ 25,000.00
10	Episcopal Conference of the Philippines	*TV Maria Foundation Philippines: PRODUCTION: Video production for TV and Social media on promotion of life	\$ 6,000.00
		*Signis Philippines: TRAINING: Training program to make participants understand "Laudato Si" and inspire them to create campaign materials for social platforms.	\$ 4,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 463,651.35</b>

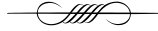
# ERRATUM



Every year we send to each Local Ordinary, Chancery, Oeconomus, and Mission Director the report on the World Mission Sunday Collection of the previous year. We also print it in our October publication, Homily Reflections. The report distributed last year for 2017 collection was correct according to our file. However, the same report that was printed in our October publication last year, contained errors involving twenty ecclesiastical jurisdictions. We immediately contacted each of the concerned ecclesiastical jurisdiction about the matter. We once again humbly apologize for this and for any inconvenience it may have caused anybody. We are hereby printing the corrected data.

<b>DIOCESES</b>	<b>REMITTANCE (Php)</b>
ALAMINOS	116,577.00
CATARMAN	48,526.45
CUBAO	1,166,708.19
DAET	100,000.00
DIGOS	367,435.06
DIPOLOG	191,347.60
DUMAGUETE	226,363.60
GUMACA	181,698.98
IBA	411,306.35
KALOOKAN	189,596.40
KIDAPAWAN	69,839.83
LAOAG	80,104.00
LEGAZPI	139,948.85
LIBMANAN	58,365.00
LUCENA	1,056,149.00
MAASIN	169,149.00
MALAYBALAY	42,167.68
MALOLOS	1,326,407.70
MARBEL	144,443.50
MASBATE	68,071.00

# POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR 2020



**JANUARY: *Promotion of World Peace***

We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

---

**FEBRUARY: *Listen to the Migrants' Cries***

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

---

**MARCH: *Catholics in China***

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

---

**APRIL: *Freedom from Addiction***

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

---

**MAY: *For Deacons***

We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

---

**JUNE: *The Way of the Heart***

We pray that all those who suffer may find their way in life, allowing themselves to be touched by the Heart of Jesus.

---

**JULY: *Our Families***

We pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance.

---

**AUGUST: *The Maritime World***

We pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families.

---

**SEPTEMBER: *Respect for the Planet's Resources***

We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

---

**OCTOBER: *The Laity's Mission in the Church***

We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church.

---

**NOVEMBER: *Artificial Intelligence***

We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.

---

**DECEMBER: *For a Life of Prayer***

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.



# THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

The **Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS)**, known in some countries as **Missio**, is a Catholic worldwide network of missionary action and cooperation that is under the canonical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). These societies include: ► *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith*, ► *The Society of the Holy Childhood Association*, ► *The Society of Saint Peter the Apostle*, ► *The Missionary Union*.

Since 1922, PMS has been the Catholic Church's official support organization for overseas mission. It raises awareness and fosters prayer and cooperation throughout the whole Catholic Church, bringing the message of Christ to the world, especially in countries where Christianity is new, young, or poor. The societies care for and support the younger Churches until they are able to be self-sufficient. PMS exists through the generosity of Catholics.

At present, Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal Toso is the President of the Pontifical Mission Societies.



## Pontifical Mission Societies - Philippines

824 Don Quijote Street, Sampaloc, 1008 Manila

Tel #: (02) 731-3208 / 781-9518 /

CP #: 0921-349-9720 / Fax #: 740-3030

Website: [www.pms-phil.org](http://www.pms-phil.org) / Twitter: [pmsphilippines](https://twitter.com/pmsphilippines)

Facebook: Pontifical Mission Societies Philippines

Email: [pilipinaspms@yahoo.com](mailto:pilipinaspms@yahoo.com) / [pmsphilippines2011@yahoo.com](mailto:pmsphilippines2011@yahoo.com)