

Saints and Popes Speak on Mission

Reflections, Insights, and Challenges

Introduction. The following forty quotes from a vast panorama of sources provide helpful insights into the Church's mission of evangelization. They can be used in a variety of ways: in conjunction with the twelve thematic mission modules; as points of discussion during formation sessions; or, as a focus for a prayer session or reflection paper. Other creative uses may also emerge: asking people to identify two or three of their favorite quotes. The quotes are randomly presented; no hierarchy of importance is implied; the numbering is only for clarity and easy reference. May you be inspired as you reflect on these beautiful mission insights!

1. "The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.... Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize." ► Pope Paul VI (EN 14)

2. "The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion.... This mission is still only beginning ... we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service." ► Pope John Paul II (RM 1)

3. "I am a Christian, and I shall die for God, and for Him I will give many thousands of lives if I had them. And so, do with me as you please." ► Saint Lorenzo Ruiz

4. "An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral." ► Pope Francis (EG 10)

5. **Anyway Insights.** "People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world the best you've got anyway. You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway." ► Saint Teresa of Calcutta

6. "Go forth and set the world on fire." ► Saint Ignatius of Loyola

7. "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."
► Pope Benedict XVI (DCE 1)

8. "Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what is still possible for you to do." ► Saint John XXIII

9. “It is no use walking somewhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”
▶ Saint Francis of Assisi
10. “Intense love does not measure, it just gives.” ▶ Saint Teresa of Calcutta
11. “Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear you.”
▶ Saint Padre Pio
12. “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” ▶ Pope Paul VI (EN 41)
13. “Speak to them of the great mercy of God.” ▶ Saint Francis Xavier
14. “Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.”
▶ Saint Thérèse of Lisieux
15. “We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.” ▶ Saint Francis of Assisi
16. “Evangelization will also always contain ... a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.” ▶ Pope Paul VI (EN 27)
17. “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 unflinchingly each day.” ▶ Pope Francis (EG 3)
18. “If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” ▶ Anonymous
19. “Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak.”
▶ Saint Anthony of Padua
20. ***Solo Dios Basta Poem.*** “Let nothing trouble you; let nothing frighten; everything passes away, but God does not. Through patience you will obtain everything; whoever has God lacks nothing; only God is enough.” ▶ Saint Teresa of Avila
21. “Proclamation of the Good News is the first and most significant expression of love for one’s neighbor.” ▶ Saint Arnold Janssen
22. “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’.” ▶ Pope Francis (EG 120)
23. “*Mission is an issue of faith*, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us.” ▶ Pope John Paul II (RM 11)

24. “You can tell the people that if they succeed in killing me, that I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish.” ► Saint Oscar Romero

25. “Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today.”
► Saint Teresa of Calcutta

26. “I plead with you: never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. Be not afraid.” ► Saint John Paul II

27. “I would be a missionary, not for a few years only, but from the beginning of creation until the consummation.” ► Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

28. Pope John XXIII’s *Decalogue*. (1) Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once. (2) Only for today, I will take the greatest care of my appearance: I will dress modestly, I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behavior; I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or to discipline anyone except myself. (3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one. (4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes. (5) Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul. (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; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices. (8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself; I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. And, I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision. (9) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world. (10) Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness. Indeed, for twelve hours I can certainly do what might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it all my life. *To conclude:* here is an all-embracing resolution: “I want to be kind, today and always, to everyone.” ► Saint John XXIII

29. Generosity Prayer. “Dear Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do your will. Amen.” ► Saint Ignatius of Loyola

30. “Christ has no body now, but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world.”
► Saint Teresa of Avila

31. “To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek Him the greatest adventure; to find Him the greatest human achievement.” ► Saint Augustine

32. “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.”

► Pope Francis (EG 15)

33. “All priests must have the mind and heart of missionaries—open to the needs of the Church and the world.” ► Pope John Paul II (RM 67)

34. “Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow.... And, may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News, not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives.” ► Pope Paul VI (EN 80)

35. “Be who God has created you to be, and you will set the world on fire.”

► Saint Catherine of Siena

36. “The Church is missionary by nature and her principal task is evangelization, which aims to proclaim and to witness to Christ and to promote his Gospel of peace and love in every environment and culture.” ► Pope Benedict XVI (11-13-06)

37. “My vocation is love, in the heart of the Church, my mother; I will be love and then I will be all things.” ► Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

38. “We must sow the seed, not hoard it.” ► Saint Dominic

39. “No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.” ► Pope John Paul II (RM 3)

40. “There is a Marian ‘style’ to the Church’s work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong....” These qualities make “the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization.”

► Pope Francis (EG 288)

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