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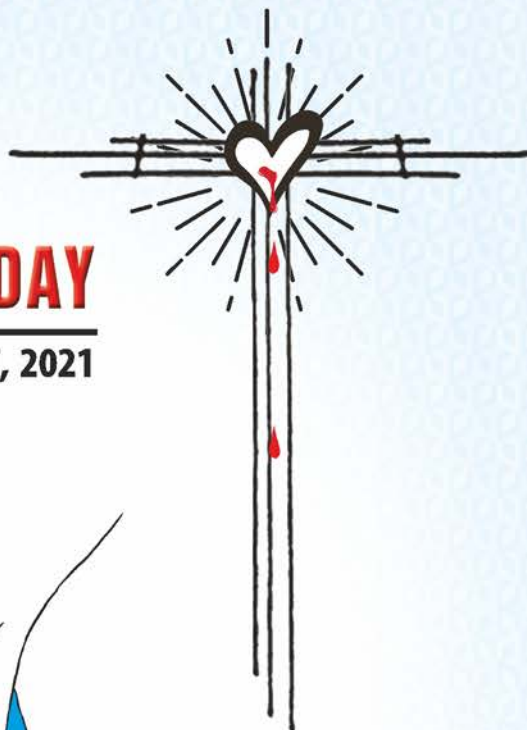
September - October 2021

# PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation

**WORLD MISSION SUNDAY**

24 OCT, 2021



**We cannot  
but speak of  
what we have  
seen and heard**

- Acts 4:20

## Quotes of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta



### PRAYER FOR MISSION

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 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.



**“Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation”** Mark 16:15



# PROCLAIM

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## Contents

(with Page Number)

- **From the DIRECTOR'S DESK** \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- **We cannot but speak** \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- **What does 'mission' mean** \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- **Traditionis Custodes** \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- **Catholic tradition, alive and well** \_\_\_\_\_ (9)
- **Not half-priests, not special altar boys** \_\_\_\_\_ (12)
- **St Joseph's Litany updated** \_\_\_\_\_ (14)
- **Testimony with Gold Medal** \_\_\_\_\_ (15)
- **SAINT OF THE MONTH**
  - St Hildegard von Bingen** \_\_\_\_\_ (16)
  - Feast Day: 17<sup>th</sup> September
  - St John Henry Newman** \_\_\_\_\_ (17)
  - Feast Day: 9<sup>th</sup> October
- **STORY CORNER**
  - The forgotten diamond** \_\_\_\_\_ (20)
- **News Round-up** \_\_\_\_\_ (22)

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**Blessed Father Paolo Manna PIME**

January 16, 1872 - September 15, 1952

**Missionary in Burma (Myanmar)**

**Superior General of the PIME &**

**Founder of the Pontifical Missionary Union**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

### We cannot but speak - Mission Day 2021

One of the supreme inventions of humans is language, and words are essential constituents of any language. Words can communicate and bind one another. Words/Language differentiate us from other animals.

There is a divine connection as well to words. Words can create and give life. The creative power of the Word is known since the Creation- "Let it be." That is why the Gospel of John says that the "Word was God."

We have been created in the likeness of the Word (Logos). Therefore we also have a responsibility to use words to create, enhance, extend the love of God.

The fact is that we as humans cannot but speak what we know and what we have experienced. And that is also the real motivator of the Mission --- the fact that humans cannot but share their experience.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for Mission Sunday for this year is taken from Acts 4:20 - "We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard." The Apostles, as the Pope says in his message for the World Mission Day 2021, experienced "the Lord's friendship, watching him cure the sick, dine with sinners, feed the hungry, draw near to the outcast, touch the unclean, identify with the needy, propose the Beatitudes and teach in a new and authoritative way, left an indelible mark on them, awakening amazement, expansive joy and a profound sense of gratitude." The Apostles who had lived, experienced the Suffering Christ and then the Risen Christ could not but share those delightful and redeeming experiences of their life. They could not shut themselves in a room but felt impelled to move around with the force of their experience to preach about the Messiah.

It is through the words of the Apostles that we have come to know and understand the salvific power of the Lord. Our experience of the Lord ought to impel us to speak about the experience of the Lord in spite of the restrictions the pandemic situation has imposed on us. The Pope says: "... there is urgent need for the mission of compassion, which can make that necessary distancing an opportunity for encounter, care and promotion."

The situation was not easy for the early church as well. The first Christians began the life of faith amid hostility and hardship. Experiences of marginalization and imprisonment combined with internal and external struggles seemed to contradict, and even negate, what they had seen and heard. Yet, rather than stepping back or closing in on themselves, they turned the problems, conflicts and difficulties into opportunities for mission.

Hence even amidst the pandemic and social distancing, we could work on creative ways in which we can become sharers of our experience with the Lord. Missions have flourished only when there have been constraints and challenges. We often speak of things that are not true. We speak words that separate people. But we are silent when we are supposed to speak the truth. May we understand the importance of speaking the truth and giving hope. Let our words be witnessing words, hopeful words that can truly become the proclamation of the experiences of the Lord and the Gospel.

Let us remember what the wisdom of the Bible teaches: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise rebuke to a listening ear." (Prov 25: 11f). "I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mt 12: 36f).



**Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu**  
**National Director (PMO-India)**



# We cannot but speak

Pope Francis' message for World Mission Day 2021

Once we experience the power of God's love, and recognize his fatherly presence in our personal and community life, we cannot help but proclaim and share *what we have seen and heard*. Jesus' relationship with his disciples and his humanity, as revealed to us in the mystery of his Incarnation, Gospel and Paschal Mystery, shows us the extent to which God loves our humanity and makes his own our joys and sufferings, our hopes and our concerns (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22). Everything about Christ reminds us that he knows well our world and its need for redemption, and calls us to become actively engaged in this mission: "Go therefore to the highways and byways, and invite everyone you find" (*Mt* 22:9). No one is excluded, no one need feel distant or removed from this compassionate love.

## The experience of the Apostles

The history of evangelization began with the Lord's own passionate desire to call and enter into friendly dialogue with everyone, just as they are (cf. *Jn* 15:12-17). The Apostles are the first to tell us this; they remembered even the day and the hour when they first met him: "It was about four o'clock in the afternoon" (*Jn* 1:39). Experiencing the Lord's friendship, watching him cure the sick, dine with sinners, feed the hungry, draw near to the outcast, touch the unclean, identify with the needy, propose the Beatitudes and teach in a new and authoritative way, left an indelible mark on them, awakening amazement, expansive joy and a profound sense of gratitude. The prophet Jeremiah describes this experience as one of a consuming awareness of the Lord's active presence in our heart, impelling us to mission, regardless of the sacrifices and misunderstandings it may entail (cf.



*Jn* 20:7-9). Love is always on the move, and inspires us to share a wonderful and hope-filled message: "We have found the Messiah" (*Jn* 1:41).

With Jesus, we too have seen, heard and experienced that things can be different. Even now, he has inaugurated future times, reminding us of an often forgotten dimension of our humanity, namely, that "we were created for a fulfilment that can only be found in love" (FratelliTutti, 68). A future that awakens a faith capable of inspiring new initiatives and shaping communities of men and women who, by learning to accept their own frailty and that of others, promote fraternity and social friendship (cf. *ibid.*, 67). The ecclesial community reveals its splendour whenever it recalls with gratitude that the Lord loved us first (cf. *1 Jn* 4:19). "The loving predilection of the Lord surprises us, and surprise by its very nature cannot be owned or imposed by us... Only in this way can the miracle of gratuitousness, the gratuitous gift of self, blossom. Nor can missionary fervour ever be obtained as a result of reasoning or calculation. To be 'in a state of mission' is a reflection of gratitude" (*Message to the Pontifical Mission Societies*, 21 May 2020).

Even so, things were not always easy. The first Christians began the life of faith amid hostility and hardship. Experiences of marginalization and imprisonment combined with internal and external struggles that seemed to contradict and even



negate what they had seen and heard. Yet, rather than a difficulty or an obstacle leading them to step back or close in on themselves, those experiences impelled them to turn problems, conflicts and difficulties into opportunities for mission. Limitations and obstacles became a privileged



occasion for anointing everything and everyone with the Spirit of the Lord. Nothing and no one was to be excluded from the message of liberation.

We have a vivid testimony to all this in the Acts of the Apostles, a book which missionary disciples always have within easy reach. There we read how the fragrance of the Gospel spread as it was preached, awakening the joy that the Spirit alone can bestow. The Book of Acts teaches us to endure hardship by clinging firmly to Christ, in order to grow in the “conviction that God is able to act in any circumstance, even amid apparent setbacks” and in the certainty that “all those who entrust themselves to God will bear good fruit” (*EvangeliiGaudium*, 279).

The same holds true for us: our own times are not easy. The pandemic has brought to the fore and amplified the pain, the solitude, the poverty and the injustices experienced by so many people. It has unmasked our false sense of security and revealed the brokenness and polarization quietly growing in our midst. Those who are most frail and vulnerable have come to feel even more so. We have experienced discouragement, disillusionment and fatigue; nor have we been immune from a growing negativity that stifles hope. For our part, however, “we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake”

(2 *Cor* 4:5). As a result, in our communities and in our families, we can hear the powerful message of life that echoes in our hearts and proclaims: “He is not here, but has risen (*Lk* 24:6)! This message of hope shatters every form of determinism and, to those who let themselves be touched by it, bestows the freedom and boldness needed to rise up and seek with creativity every possible way to show compassion, the “sacramental” of God’s closeness to us, a closeness that abandons no one along the side of the road.

In these days of pandemic, when there is a temptation to disguise and justify indifference and apathy in the name of healthy social distancing, there is urgent need for *the mission of compassion*, which can make that necessary distancing an opportunity for encounter, care and promotion. “What we have seen and heard” (*Acts* 4:20), the mercy we have experienced, can thus become a point of reference and a source of credibility, enabling us to recover a shared passion for building “a community of belonging and solidarity worthy of our time, our energy and our resources” (*FratelliTutti*, 36). The Lord’s word daily rescues and saves us from the excuses that can plunge us into the worst kind of skepticism: “Nothing changes, everything stays the same”. To those who wonder why they should give up their security, comforts and pleasures if they can see no important



result, our answer will always remain the same: “Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and is now almighty. Jesus Christ is truly alive” (*EvangeliiGaudium*, 275) and wants us to be alive, fraternal, and capable of cherishing and sharing

this message of hope. In our present circumstances, there is an urgent need for missionaries of hope who, anointed by the Lord, can provide a prophetic reminder that no one is saved by himself.

Like the Apostles and the first Christians, we too can say with complete conviction: “We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard” (*Acts* 4:20). Everything we have received from the Lord is meant to be put to good use and freely shared with others. Just as the Apostles saw, heard and touched the saving power of Jesus (cf. *1 Jn* 1:1-4), we too can daily touch the sorrowful and glorious flesh of Christ. There we can find the courage to share with everyone we meet a destiny of hope, the sure knowledge that the Lord is ever at our side. As Christians, we cannot keep the Lord to ourselves: the Church’s evangelizing mission finds outward fulfilment in the transformation of our world and in the care of creation.

### An invitation to each of us

The theme of this year’s World Mission Day – “We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard” (*Acts* 4:20), is a summons to each of us to “own” and to bring to others what we bear in our hearts. This mission has always been the hallmark of the Church, for “she exists to evangelize” (SAINT PAUL VI, *EvangeliiNuntiandi*, 14). Our life of faith grows weak, loses its prophetic power and its ability to awaken amazement and gratitude when we become isolated and withdraw into little groups. By its very nature, the life of faith calls for a growing openness to embracing everyone, everywhere. The first Christians, far from yielding to the temptation to become an elite group, were inspired by the Lord and his offer of new life to go out among the nations and to bear witness to what they had seen and heard: the good news that the Kingdom of God is at hand. They did so with the

generosity, gratitude and nobility typical of those who sow seeds in the knowledge that others will enjoy the fruit of their efforts and sacrifice. I like to think that “even those who are most frail, limited and troubled can be missionaries in their own way, for goodness can always be shared, even if it exists alongside many limitations” (*Christus Vivit*, 239).

On World Mission Day, which we celebrate each year on the penultimate Sunday of October, we recall with gratitude all those men and women who by their testimony of life help us to renew our baptismal commitment to be generous and joyful apostles of the Gospel. Let us remember especially all those who resolutely set out, leaving home and family behind, to bring the Gospel to all those places and people athirst for its saving message.

Contemplating their missionary witness, we are inspired to be courageous ourselves and to beg

“the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (*Lk* 10:2). We know that the call to mission is not a thing of the past, or a romantic leftover from earlier times. Today too Jesus needs hearts capable of experiencing vocation as a true love

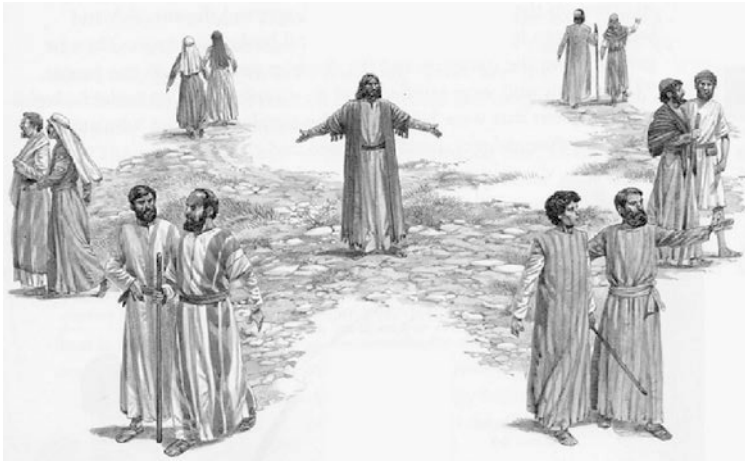
story that urges them to go forth to the peripheries of our world as messengers and agents of compassion. He addresses this call to everyone, and in different ways. We can think of the peripheries all around us, in the heart of our cities or our own families. Universal openness to love has a dimension that is not geographical but existential. Always, but especially in these times of pandemic, it is important to grow in our daily ability to widen our circle, to reach out to others who, albeit physically close to us, are not immediately part of our “circle of interests” (cf. FratelliTutti, 97). To be on mission is to be willing to think as Christ does, to believe with him that those around us are also my brothers and sisters. May his compassionate love touch our hearts and make us all true missionary disciples. ♦





# What does 'mission' mean?

*Mickey Friesen and Eric Simon*



remote and troubled areas to bring the Gospel.

Third, there is the mission field of transforming the world which means contributing toward bringing about God's kingdom in our time.

Finally, there is the mission of the new evangelization. This is the attempt to reach out to those who may have faded from the Church or become separated for any number of reasons.

[The Church is missionary because that was the way of Christ. Jesus said to his apostles, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The mission of Jesus to proclaim the Kingdom of God to all people has been handed onto the Church and individual believers, guided by the Holy Spirit.]

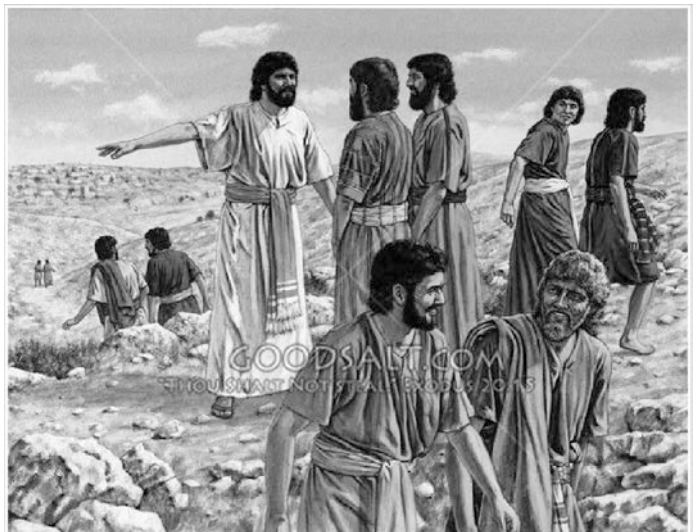
The Sacrament of Baptism initiates believers into the life and mission of Christ. All members of the Church are called to share their gifts in faith to build up the Body of Christ and to make the name of Jesus known and loved in our time. The Church continues Jesus' mission of "bringing good news to the poor, liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for those who are oppressed and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

The Church carries its mission out in four fields:

First, there is the Pastoral Mission which is the ongoing work to build up the members of the Church.

Second, there is the Mission to the ends of the earth where the Gospel of Jesus is shared. This can mean travelling to

Baptism calls the entire Church into Christ's mission and there are many ways and opportunities for believers to engage in mission according to individual gifts. Believers can discern those gifts and interests through study, experience and prayer and being open to the Holy Spirit. Some are given a special vocation to leave their home and travel to a new and foreign land to bring Christ. Others engage in shorter trips and carry their experiences into their daily lives. The missionary is one who crosses many borders to carry the Word of the Lord to those still waiting to hear it and those needing encouragement to continue to grow in their faith. ♦



# Traditionis Custodes

Motu Proprio on use of pre-1970 Liturgy



Guardians of the tradition, the bishops in communion with the Bishop of Rome constitute the visible principle and foundation of the unity of their particular Churches. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the Gospel and by means of the celebration of the Eucharist, they govern the particular Churches entrusted to them.

In order to promote the concord and unity of the Church, with paternal solicitude towards those who in any region adhere to liturgical forms antecedent to the reform willed by the Vatican Council II, my Venerable Predecessors, Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI, granted and regulated the faculty to use the Roman Missal edited by John XXIII in 1962. In this way they intended “to facilitate the ecclesial communion of those Catholics who feel attached to some earlier liturgical forms” and not to others.

In line with the initiative of my Venerable Predecessor Benedict XVI to invite the bishops to assess the application of the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* three years after its publication, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith carried out a detailed consultation of the bishops in 2020. The results have been carefully considered in the light of experience that has matured during these years.

At this time, having considered the wishes expressed by the episcopate and having heard the

opinion of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, I now desire, with this Apostolic Letter, to press on ever more in the constant search for ecclesial communion. Therefore, I have considered it appropriate to establish the following:

Art. 1.

The liturgical books promulgated by Saint Paul VI and Saint John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II, are the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite.

Art. 2

It belongs to the diocesan bishop, as moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole liturgical life of the particular Church entrusted to him, to regulate the liturgical celebrations of his diocese. Therefore, it is his exclusive competence to authorize the use of the 1962 Roman Missal in his diocese, according to the guidelines of the Apostolic See.

Art. 3.

The bishop of the diocese in which until now there exist one or more groups that celebrate according to the Missal antecedent to the reform of 1970:



§ 1. is to determine that these groups do not deny the validity and the legitimacy of the liturgical reform, dictated by Vatican Council II and the Magisterium of the Supreme Pontiffs;

§ 2. is to designate one or more locations where the faithful adherents of these groups may gather for the eucharistic celebration (not however in the parochial churches and without the erection of new personal parishes);

§ 3. to establish at the designated locations the days on which eucharistic celebrations are permitted using the Roman Missal promulgated by Saint



John XXIII in 1962. In these celebrations the readings are proclaimed in the vernacular language, using translations of the Sacred Scripture approved for liturgical use by the respective Episcopal Conferences;

§ 4. to appoint a priest who, as delegate of the bishop, is entrusted with these celebrations and with the pastoral care of these groups of the faithful. This priest should be suited for this responsibility, skilled in the use of the *Missale Romanum* antecedent to the reform of 1970, possess a knowledge of the Latin language sufficient for a thorough comprehension of the rubrics and liturgical texts, and be animated by a lively pastoral charity and by a sense of ecclesial communion. This priest should have at heart not only the correct celebration of the liturgy, but also the pastoral and spiritual care of the faithful;

§ 5. to proceed suitably to verify that the parishes canonically erected for the benefit of these faithful are effective for their spiritual growth, and to determine whether or not to retain them;

§ 6. to take care not to authorize the establishment of new groups.

Art. 4.

Priests ordained after the publication of the present *Motu Proprio*, who wish to celebrate using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, should submit a formal request to the diocesan Bishop who shall consult the Apostolic See before granting this authorization.

Art. 5.

Priests who already celebrate according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 should request from the diocesan Bishop the authorization to continue to enjoy this faculty.

Art. 6.

Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life, erected by the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, fall under the competence of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies for Apostolic Life.

Art. 7.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, for matters of their particular competence, exercise the authority of the Holy See with respect to the observance of these provisions.

Art. 8.

Previous norms, instructions, permissions, and customs that do not conform to the provisions of the present *Motu Proprio* are abrogated.

Everything that I have declared in this Apostolic Letter in the form of *Motu Proprio*, I order to be observed in all its parts, anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, and I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication in “L’Osservatore Romano”, entering immediately in force and, subsequently, that it be published in the official Commentary of the Holy See, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. ♦





# Catholic tradition, alive and well

Pope Francis unifies the Roman Rite

*By Rita Ferrone*

July 16, 2021 was a great day for the Roman Rite and for the legacy of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

Finally, after years of accommodating those who dislike or actually reject the liturgical reforms of the Council, the

Catholic Church's highest authority took a definitive step to re-establish the reformed rites as normative for the whole Latin Rite Church, without exception.

Pope Francis, in his motu proprio *Traditionis custodes*, not only firmly abrogated Pope Benedict's motu proprio *Summorum pontificum* (2007) which had "freed" the older rites, allowing them to be celebrated by any priest at any time, he also declared and established that the reformed liturgy is "the unique *lex orandi* [law of prayer]" of the Church today.

This puts an end to the bifurcation of the Roman Rite that Pope Benedict endorsed when he wrote *Summorum pontificum*.

He invented the term "Extraordinary Form" to refer to the older rites, and called the reformed rites the "Ordinary Form." The Roman Rite had never existed in two forms at the same time, yet that is what he envisioned. He urged the bishops to trust that these "two forms" of the Roman Rite would peacefully coexist and enrich one another.



After thirteen years however, it became evident that this dream was not going to materialize.

Clearly, some individuals find serene enjoyment in attending Mass according to the older rites and have no other agenda. But, overall, opening up more

space for the older rites has deepened conflict in the Church and led to politicization of the Eucharist. This was always a danger.

## Opposition to Francis and Vatican II

Opposition to Pope Francis has also found a base in traditionalist communities. His teaching on marriage and family, his call for pastoral accompaniment, and especially his commitment to ecological responsibility and economic justice,



have been virulently opposed in such circles.

Pope Francis has, no doubt, been hearing for a

long time about such tensions and difficulties, but a turning point was reached when he commissioned a worldwide survey of bishops to evaluate *Summorum pontificum*. The results of the survey



were deeply troubling, compelling him to act, he said in a letter accompanying his *motu proprio*.

### **Cultivating a reactionary thought world**

..... Instead of promoting greater harmony with and closeness to the universal Church, broad availability of the older rites has been used as an opportunity to create a “church within a Church,” a community apart from the mainstream.

It is not just a matter of lace and Latin. A reactionary thought world is being cultivated as well. One can hardly overstate the noise that freeing the older rites has introduced into liturgical discussions, even though the actual number of traditionalists remains small.

A constant stream of criticism has poured forth from traditionalist enclaves challenging liturgical decisions flowing from the reform, such as use of the vernacular, Communion in the hand, women in the sanctuary, and the priest facing the people at Eucharist. This noisy opposition grabs attention and causes distraction. A graver problem is that some adherents of the older rites have sown doubts about the validity of the liturgical reform overall, and propagate the erroneous view that the reformed liturgy represents a betrayal of orthodoxy and a departure from “the true Church.”

### **Francis strategically corrects the balance**

Leading voices among traditionalists in America lately have totally abandoned Benedict’s

project of “mutual enrichment.” There can be no real peace with the newer liturgical forms, they argue, because the reformed rite is fundamentally flawed, a modernist creation. It is not even a rite, they claim, but a mere construction.

“In this context, Pope Francis’s move is one of great strategic importance. It corrects the balance. It safeguards the integrity of the Council. It decisively rejects frivolous claims that “this isn’t what the Council wanted”, that “the reformed liturgy is irreverent and unorthodox”, and calls everyone back to one common path. It will not eliminate political conflicts or disagreements in the Church, but it deprives traditionalists of the possibility of using the Eucharist as a hub of resistance to the Council and its legitimate implementation.

Some have charged that Pope Francis acted autocratically in abrogating *Summorum pontificum*, but actually his actions have been far more collegial than those his predecessors took in expanding availability of the older rites. A brief look at the history reveals this.

### **The world’s bishops were ignored**

In 1980, when Pope John Paul II was considering giving an indult for celebration of the Tridentine Mass, he took a survey of the world’s bishops. Most expected it to cause division and were opposed. Only 1.5 percent were in favor. Nevertheless, he went ahead with it. He was hoping to effect a reconciliation with Archbishop Lefebvre and his followers who had broken with the Church because they would not accept Vatican II. This outreach proved unsuccessful.

When John Paul considered whether to broaden this permission in 1988, he didn’t ask the bishops. Instead, he consulted with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by then-Cardinal Josef Ratzinger. Once again motivated by hope for the healing the wound caused by schism (which is why the *motu proprio* is called *Ecclesia Dei afflicta*), he expanded access further. Still, there was no reconciliation with Lefebvre’s group, the Society of St. Pius X

(SSPX). When Benedict XVI issued *Summorum pontificum* in 2007, he conducted no survey, but it appears that some bishops did voice doubts and try to dissuade him. He overruled them. History repeated itself; the overtures to the SSPX were again rebuffed.

Benedict said (in 2007) that the bishops could evaluate how *Summorum pontificum* was going in three years. But no evaluation was sought until 2020 when Francis sent out his survey.

### **Francis reaffirms the “living” tradition**

Once Pope Francis consulted with the bishops of the world, he saw it all clearly. It was time to put his foot down. Accordingly, as of July 16, 2021, there is no more “Extraordinary Form” and “Ordinary Form.” There is but one form of the Roman Rite: the liturgy as it was reformed by decree of the Second Vatican Council. Pope

F r a n c i s reaffirmed what his predecessors have also been saying since the Council: This reform is an expression of the living Catholic tradition.



Tradition is not the preservation of old things, it is a vital reality, guided by the Holy Spirit working through the Church and its leadership. Francis is saying, if you want to find traditional liturgy, here it is—in the reformed rites. He has not outlawed the older rites altogether. The liturgical books antecedent to the reform may still be used to celebrate the liturgy (according to the 1962 edition) but under limited circumstances, not in parishes, and not at the whim of individual priests.

### **Bishops in charge**

It is up to the local bishop to decide when and where these liturgies may be celebrated, and by whom. Pope Francis has made it clear that the bishops are not to give this permission to anyone who challenges the legitimacy and orthodoxy of

the reform or who rejects the authority of the pope and bishops. Any priest ordained after July 16, 2021 who wants to celebrate the older rites must obtain permission from his bishop and from Rome. The bishop also gets to decide how long such celebrations may continue.

Several American bishops have already been responding to *Traditionis custodes* as though they have carte blanche to continue use of the older rites indefinitely. This is not true.

Francis has specifically said that their job is to guide these communities that currently follow the older rites to a state of mind and soul where they can celebrate the mainstream liturgy of the Church with full, heartfelt assent. This is the goal—not pacification, not perpetuation of the older rites, but rather the embrace of the reformed liturgy as a “unitary expression of the Roman Rite.” The

bishop, as a custodian of tradition, is obliged to exercise his authority in concert with the Holy See, and this means walking in the direction

outlined by Pope Francis.

### **Liturgy is not just a matter of personal taste**

Most Catholics never objected to Benedict’s initiative because, as they viewed it, it pertained to a small group of people and wouldn’t affect them personally. In an age when individualism and consumer choice seem like the normal state of affairs, it didn’t seem outlandish to provide boutique alternatives for different liturgical tastes, even if this included a taste for a liturgy that had been superseded by a lawful reform called for by an ecumenical council.

But liturgy is not just a matter of personal taste. It is a matter of faith and obedience. It belongs to the collective, which is why it is enshrined in law and subject to authority.



## Not half-priests, not special altar boys

By Robin Gomes



“The generosity of a deacon who spends himself without seeking the front lines smells of the Gospel and tells of the greatness of God’s humility that takes the first step to meet even those who have turned their backs on Him.”

This is how Pope Francis envisages the role of a permanent deacon among the People of God in the Church. He made the comment on Saturday, 19 June 2021, during a meeting with some 500 people, including permanent deacons from his Diocese of Rome, along with their families.

In the Catholic Church, the diaconate is the first of three ranks in ordained ministry – bishops, priests and deacons. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Latin-rite Church has restored the diaconate “as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy”. Deacons preparing for the priesthood are transitional deacons, while those not planning to be ordained priests are permanent deacons. Permanent diaconate can be conferred on a single or married man. If he is married, he must be so before receiving the diaconate.

### Logic of lowering and service

In his address to the group, Pope Francis explained that the main path of the ministry of the deacon is indicated in *Lumen Gentium*, the Second

Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which says that the diaconate is “not for the priesthood but for service.” The Pope explained that this difference, which in the previous conception reduced the diaconate to a passage to the priesthood, “helps to overcome the scourge of clericalism, which places a caste of priests ‘above’ the People of God”. And if this is not overcome, clericalism will continue in the Church.

Precisely because deacons are dedicated to the service of the People of God, they remind us that in the ecclesial body no one can elevate himself above others. In the Church, the logic of lowering must be applied. “We are all called to lower ourselves because Jesus lowered Himself” making “Himself the smallest and the servant of all.” The Holy Father said, “Please let us remember that for the disciples of Jesus, to love is to serve and to serve is to reign. Power lies in service, not in anything else.” Since deacons are the guardians of service in the Church, the Pope said, they are the guardians of true “power” in the Church, so that no one goes beyond the power of service.

Speaking about what he called a “constitutively diaconal Church,” the Pope told his permanent deacons that if they don’t live this



dimension of service, their ministry will become sterile and will not produce fruit, but will slowly become worldly. Deacons remind the Church that what Saint Theresa discovered is true: the Church has a heart that burns with love and serves with humility and joy, a heart throbbing with service. “The generosity of a deacon who spends himself without seeking the front lines,” Pope Francis said, “smells of the Gospel and tells of the greatness of God’s humility that takes the first step to meet even those who have turned their backs on Him.”

## Charity and administration

Even though the decreasing number of vocations to the priesthood demands the commitment of deacons to tasks of substitution, the Holy Father said, that does not constitute the specific nature of the diaconate. The Vatican Council emphasizes that permanent deacons are above all “devoted to the offices of charity and administration,” which phrase recalls the early centuries, when deacons looked after the needs of



the faithful, especially the poor and the sick, in the name and on behalf of the bishop. The pope noted that in the great imperial metropolis of Rome seven

places were organized, distinct from the parishes and distributed throughout the city’s municipalities, in which deacons carried out widespread work on behalf of the entire Christian community, especially the “least of these,” so that, as the Acts of the Apostles says, no one among them would be in need.

### Not “half priests”

Pope Francis said that Rome Diocese is trying to recover this ancient tradition with the *diakonia* (‘service’ in Greek) in the church of San Stanislaus, in Caritas and in other areas in the service of the poor. This way, he said, deacons will never lose their bearings, becoming “half- or second-category priests” and “fancy altar boys,” but will be caring servants, who do their best to ensure that no one is excluded and the love of the Lord touches people's lives in a tangible way.

Hence, the spirituality of deacons could be briefly summed up as the spirituality of service characterized by willingness on the inside and

openness on the outside. Willingness on the inside, from the heart, ready to say yes, docile, without making life revolve around one’s own agenda; and open on the outside, looking at everyone, especially those who are left out, those who feel excluded.

Referring to a passage from Don Orione, who spoke about welcoming those in need, the pope said: “In our houses” - he was speaking to the religious of his congregation - “in our houses everyone who has a need, any kind of need, anything, even those who have pain, must be welcomed” --- To receive not only the needy, but those who have pain, to help these people is important

### Profile of a deacon

Pope Francis said he expects three things from his deacons:

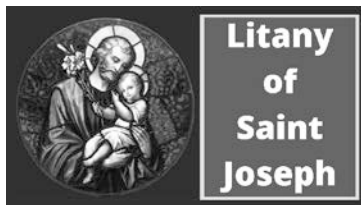
Firstly, they should be humble, without showing off like a peacock or putting themselves at the centre. “It is sad to see a bishop and a priest showing off, but it is even sadder to see a deacon wanting to put himself at the centre of the world, or at the centre of the liturgy, or at the centre of the Church.” The good they do should be a secret between them and God.

Secondly, by being good spouses and fathers or grandfathers, they will give hope and consolation to couples in difficulties who will find in their “genuine simplicity an outstretched hand.” That would be a great testimony that is worth more than many sermons.



Thirdly and finally, the Pope urged them to be “sentinels” who know not only how to spot those far away and the poor but who also to help the Christian community spot Jesus in the poor and the distant, as He knocks on our doors through them. This is also a catechetical and prophetic dimension of the sentinel-prophet-catechist who knows how to see beyond and help others to see beyond, and to see the poor who are far away. ♦

# St Joseph's Litany updated



The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has introduced 7 new invocations.

To update the Litany in honour of St Joseph approved by the Apostolic See in 1908. These invocations reflect St Joseph as the patron of Universal Church. The initiative comes during the Year of St Joseph which Pope Francis declared from 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021.

The new invocations, originally in Latin, are as follows:

*Custos Redemptoris*  
*Serve Christi*  
*Minister salutis*  
*Fulcimen in difficultatibus*  
*Patrone exsulum*  
*Patrone afflictorum*  
*Patrone pauperum.*

These could be translated as

*Guardian of the Redeemer*  
*Servant of Christ*  
*Minister of salvation*  
*Support in difficulties*  
*Patron of exiles*  
*Patron of the afflicted*  
*Patron of the poor.*

With these additions, the invocations in the Litany to St Joseph now rise to 31.

The invocations reflect the modern papal text about St Joseph. The main text includes Pope Francis' apostolic letter *Patris corde* (2020) and St. John Paul II's 1989 apostolic exhortation *Redemptoris Custos* (Protector of the Redeemer). The addition is another encouragement for the faithful to seek St Joseph's intercession, imitate his virtues and zeal in our times.

In a letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences around the world, on May 1, the feast of St Joseph the Worker, the Secretary of the Congregation, Archbishop Arthur Roche, and Undersecretary Father Corrado Maggioni, SMM, explained the reason behind the move.

"On the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, published the Apostolic Letter *Patris corde*, with the aim 'to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal,'" they said.

"In this light, it appeared opportune to update the Litany in honor of Saint Joseph, approved by the Apostolic See in 1909, by integrating seven new invocations drawn from the interventions of the Popes who have reflected on aspects of the figure of the Patron of the Universal Church."

The additions to the Litany of St Joseph were approved by Pope Francis.

The Congregation said, "It will be the responsibility of the Episcopal Conferences to see to the translation and publication of the Litany in the languages which are within their competency; these translations do not require the confirmation of the Apostolic See." The Congregation has also allowed the bishops conferences to add other invocations with which St

Joseph is honoured in their countries. "Such additions," it said, "should be made in the proper place and preserve the literary genre of the Litany."

A litany is a type of repetitive, petitionary prayer, often invoking the intercession of the saints or the Virgin Mary under different titles approved by the Church.

<https://www.ncregister.com/news/vatican-adds-seven-invocations-to-litany-of-st-joseph> ♦





# Testimony with Gold Medal



“It is a sign of ... my faith to Mama Mary and Jesus Christ,” she said.

In a statement, Archbishop Romulo Valles of Davao congratulated Diaz on behalf of the Philippine bishops.

“Her victory was captured through many lenses, and in one of those photos was her holding the gold medal and wearing a Miraculous Medal of Our Lady on her chest. We admire her devotion to the Blessed Mother as she carried in her victory her great faith in God.

Hidilyn Diaz became the Philippines’ first Olympic gold medal winner, set an Olympic record — and thanked her friends who prayed the Miraculous Medal novena. In a virtual news conference, the 30-year-old said she also prayed the novena and wore the medal.

After winning July 26, the four-time Olympian praised God and lifted up Our Lady’s Miraculous Medal from around her neck while repeatedly shouting “Thank You, Lord,” reported the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines News. That gesture by Diaz went viral, C B C P News reported.

After her win in the women’s 55-kg weightlifting — she had an overall lift of 224 kilograms — more than 493 pounds — she told the virtual news conference about the Miraculous Medal.

Hidilyn Diaz became the Philippines’ first Olympic gold medal winner, set an Olympic record — and thanked her friends who prayed the Miraculous Medal novena.

“Hidilyn is a true weightlifter who draws her strength from her love for the country and a deep Catholic faith,” the archbishop said. “Congratulations, Hidilyn! May the Lord continue to bless you with perseverance.”

After her win in the women’s 55-kg weightlifting, Diaz told the virtual news conference about the Miraculous Medal. “It is a sign of...my faith to Mama Mary and Jesus Christ,” she said.

Diaz is active on social media. On her Instagram, she posted a story with a text that read, “Thank you for praying!”

In a Jan. 29, 2020, Instagram post, she said, “I thank God for having a team who is there fighting and working together for one goal and one dream for the



Philippines. We will grow together towards #Tokyo2020.”

Diaz was the fifth of six children in a family that lived near Zamboanga city on Mindanao. In a

## SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

# St Hildegard von Bingen

1098 – 17 September 1179

Feast Day: 17 September

St Hildegard, also called Hildegard von Bingen, by name Sibyl of the Rhine, was born in 1098, at Bermersheim, Rhineland Palatinate (Germany) and died on September 17, 1179, at Rupertsberg, near Bingen. Was beatified on 26 August 1326 by Pope John XXII and canonized on May 10, 2012 and Doctor of the Church on 07 October 2012 by Benedict XVI; her feast day is celebrated on September 17. She is a German abbess, visionary mystic, and composer.



secretary. However, in 1141 a vision of God gave Hildegard instant understanding of the meaning of religious texts. He commanded her to write down everything she would observe in her visions.

Hildegard was 15 years old when she began wearing the Benedictine habit and pursuing a religious life. She succeeded Jutta as prioress in 1136. Having experienced visions since she was a child, at age 43 she consulted her confessor, who in turn reported the matter to the Archbishop of Mainz. A committee of

Hildegard was the tenth child born to a noble family. As was customary with the tenth child, which the family could not count on feeding, and who could be considered a tithe, she was dedicated at birth to the Church. The girl started to have visions of luminous objects at the age of three, but soon realized she was unique in this ability and hid this gift for many years.

At age eight her family sent Hildegard to an anchoress named Jutta to receive a religious education. Jutta was born into a wealthy and prominent family, and by all accounts was a young woman of great beauty who had spurned the world for a life dedicated to God as an anchoress.

The proximity of Jutta's anchorage to the church of the Benedictine monastery at Disibodenberg exposed Hildegard to religious services which were the basis for her own musical compositions. After Jutta's death, when Hildegard was 38 years of age, she was elected the head of the budding convent that had grown up around the anchorage. During the years with Jutta, Hildegard confided of her visions only to Jutta and a monk named Volmar, who was to become her lifelong

theologians subsequently confirmed the authenticity of Hildegard's visions, and a monk was appointed to help her record them in writing. The finished work, *Scivias* (1141–52), consists of 26 visions that are prophetic and apocalyptic in form and in their treatment of such topics as the church, the relationship between God and humanity, and redemption. Hildegard's visions caused her to see humans as "living sparks" of God's love, coming from God as daylight comes from the sun. Sin destroyed the original harmony of creation; Christ's redeeming death and resurrection opened up new possibilities. Virtuous living reduces the estrangement from God and others that sin causes.

About 1147 Hildegard left Disibodenberg with several nuns to found a new convent at Rupertsberg, where she continued to exercise the gift of prophecy and to record her visions in writing.

A talented poet and composer, Hildegard collected 77 of her lyric poems, each with a musical setting composed by her, in *Symphonia*

## SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

# St John Henry Newman

21 February 1801 - 11 August 1890

Feast Day: 09 October

John Henry Newman, the 19th-century's most important English-speaking Catholic theologian, spent the first half of his life as an Anglican and the second half as a Roman Catholic. He was a priest, popular preacher, writer, and eminent theologian in both churches.

Born in London, England, he studied at Oxford's Trinity College, was a tutor at Oriel College, and for 17 years was vicar of the university church, St. Mary the Virgin. He eventually published eight volumes of *Parochial and Plain Sermons* as well as two novels. His poem *Dream of Gerontius* was set to music by Sir Edward Elgar.

John Henry Newman was born on 21st February 1801, the eldest son of a London banker. His family were ordinary church-going members of the Church of England. They had no strong religious tendencies, but John Henry did develop a love for the Bible. He went to a private boarding school in Ealing for eight years, where he experienced a spiritual conversion which was to determine the rest of his life as a quest for spiritual perfection.

As a young man, he continued his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, and came under the influence of other colleagues who taught him to think critically about theology. He was a very successful student and read widely. He was elected to a coveted Fellowship of Oriel College. He was ordained and worked as a curate and later a Vicar of the University Church and had a charismatic influence on his parishioners and members of the community. He worked as a



College Tutor and later began to research many theological works which put him at the forefront of religious writers. His studies of the Fathers of the Church led him to realise the importance of the resurrection, the incarnational and sacramental nature of the Christianity and the Church, and reinforced his love of the Bible, his experience of personal conversion and the importance of a critical

theology.

A series of events within the Church of England caused him to question his spiritual path within the Anglican faith. He withdrew from Oxford and for three years led a very strict religious life, praying for light and guidance. In 1845, he knew his path lay within Catholicism and on 9th October of that year, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

His choice to convert to Catholicism meant he was ostracized by his family and friends. Undeterred, he set out to study for the priesthood and he was ordained a priest in Rome. He returned to England and founded the first Oratorian Congregation in Birmingham, with a second in London and established the Oratory School in Birmingham. In 1851 the Bishops of Ireland decided that there should be a separate University for Catholic students. John Henry became its founder and first Rector, establishing what is known today as University College Dublin.

In 1879, Pope Leo XIII made John Henry Newman a Cardinal in tribute to his extraordinary work and devotion. At his death in 1890, it was said that he had done more than any other person to



change the attitude of non-Catholics to Catholics. Between 15,000 to 20,000 people lined the streets to pay their respects at his funeral. The Cork Examiner noted ‘Cardinal Newman goes to his grave with the singular honour of being by all creeds and classes acknowledged as the just man made perfect’.

John Henry Newman has been called the “absent Father of Vatican II” because his writings on conscience, religious liberty, Scripture, the vocation of lay people, the relation of Church and State, and other topics were extremely influential in the shaping of the Council’s documents. Although Newman was not always understood or appreciated, he steadfastly preached the Good News by word and example

Here are five ways Newman remains relevant



to the world today: a) He prioritized the education of the lay faithful. b) He fostered community. c) He stood up for the truth. d) He had equal concern for the head and heart. e) He re-imagined the relationship of doctrine to history.

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Newman in London. Benedict noted Newman’s emphasis on the vital place of revealed religion in civilized society, but also praised his pastoral zeal for the sick, the poor, the bereaved, and those in prison. Pope Francis canonized Newman in October 2019. Saint John Henry Newman’s liturgical feast is celebrated on October 9.

**Source:** [www.jhn.herts.sch.uk/501](http://www.jhn.herts.sch.uk/501);  
[www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org);  
[www.vaticannews.va/en](http://www.vaticannews.va/en);  
[www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org) ♦

### Continued from Page 16: St Hildegard von Bingen



*armonie  
celestium  
revelationum.*  
Her numerous  
other writings  
included lives  
of saints; two  
treatises on  
medicine and

natural history, reflecting a quality of scientific observation rare at that period; and extensive correspondence, in which are to be found further prophecies and allegorical treatises. She also for amusement contrived her own language. She travelled widely throughout Germany, evangelizing large groups of people about her visions and religious insights.

The 12th century was also the time of schisms and religious confusion when anyone preaching any outlandish doctrine could attract a large following. Hildegard was critical of schismatics, and preached against them her whole life.

Hildegard was no stranger to controversy. The monks near her original foundation protested vigorously when she moved her monastery to Bingen, overlooking the Rhine River. She confronted Emperor Frederick Barbarossa for supporting at least three anti-popes. Hildegard challenged the Cathars, who rejected the Catholic Church claiming to follow a more pure Christianity.

Between 1152 and 1162, Hildegard often preached in the Rhineland. Her monastery was placed under interdict because she had permitted the burial of a young man who had been excommunicated. She insisted that he had been reconciled with the Church and had received its sacraments before dying. Hildegard protested bitterly when the local bishop forbade the celebration of or reception of the Eucharist at the Bingen monastery, a sanction that was lifted only a few months before her death.

**Source:** [www.catholicsaints.info/saints](http://www.catholicsaints.info/saints);  
[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com); [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org) ♦

*Continued from Page 15: Testimony with Gold Medal*

feature posted before the competition, olympics.com reported that, while still in school, she would go with her father to help sell vegetables and fish on the street or at the local market. Many nights rice mixed with soy sauce was all the family had to eat.

“Introduced to weightlifting by her cousin, Catalino Diaz Jr., the little girl who would become a national icon started lifting weights made from plastic pipes and homemade concrete weights cast in old tin cans,” reported olympics.com.” It said people who noticed her dedication and talent began to help.

“I’m just thankful to God that he gave me a chance to be a role model, for the youth to believe

in the fact that Ate (a Tagalog term meaning “older sister”) Hidilyn is a fighter, fighting for her dreams,” she was quoted as saying. “Maybe God brought me here to inspire the youth to engage in sports and teach them the value of sports.”

Diaz’s inspirational victory and public display of her Catholic faith touched the hearts of church leaders and Filipino Catholics watching from home and quickly went viral on social media.

Philippine Catholic bishops congratulated the country’s first-ever Olympic gold medalist, weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz, not only for her victory but for her show of faith and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. ♦

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*Continued from Page 11: Catholic tradition, alive and well*

It’s worth remembering that establishing the reformed liturgy as the “unitary expression of the Roman Rite” does not in any way compromise the Church’s commitment to inculturation, as Swiss liturgical scholar Martin Klöckener has rightly noted. Inculturation is an entirely different question, because in every case the reformed Roman Rite is the basis of inculturation. Pope Francis wants to advance the liturgical reforms of Vatican II.



His recent decision to open instituted ministries of lectors and acolytes to women gives evidence of this, as does his emphasis on the Word of God, mystagogy, and liturgical catechesis.

Through his openness to inculturation, his decision concerning washing women’s feet on Holy Thursday, his return of authority over

liturgical translations to the bishops, and even by restricting private Masses at St. Peter’s Basilica in favor of concelebration, he has pressed forward with the reform. The last surviving Italian bishop who participated in the Second Vatican Council is the retired bishop of Ivrea, Luigi Bettazzi, age 98.

He is also the last surviving signer of the “pact of the catacombs” (a pledge made by 40 council fathers to embrace evangelical poverty, humility, charity, justice, and witness).

Four days after Francis promulgated his motuproprio, and surely with these events in mind, he said, “We are halfway across the ford, but let’s remember that we still have to cross it.”

**Source:** *La Croix International*:  
[international@la-croix.com](mailto:international@la-croix.com) 29 July 2021 ♦

## The forgotten diamond



Ashley turned the beautiful stone over and over again in her hand. “Are you really giving this to *me*?” she whispered in awe and wonder. The thought that her father was giving her this priceless diamond seemed almost too much to comprehend.

“Yes, my darling daughter, I am giving you that diamond. Love and cherish it, and keep it ever in your thoughts.”

Ashley threw her arms around her father’s neck. How she loved him! She couldn’t imagine life without his love.

For the first several months after Ashley’s father gave her the diamond, she guarded the diamond as she would her own life. She spent hours gazing upon it, then went and told everyone she knew about her father’s marvellous love. Her heart of gratitude showed in everything she did. She was kind and loving toward others because her thoughts were focused on her father’s kindness to her. She was always eager to serve and praise her father because her thoughts were completely consumed with him.

I’d like to stop here and say that Ashley faithfully treasured her diamond for the rest of her

life and continually lived in the same joy she had those first few weeks. But I’m afraid that would not be true. Ever so gradually, Ashley began to become accustomed to the diamond she’d been given. Although the diamond itself never diminished in value one bit, she stopped thinking of it as much throughout her day. While she was still kind toward others and told others of her father’s love, she did so more from habit and duty than from gratitude and joy. Her words sounded like hollow recitations instead of heartfelt realities.

“Ashley, can I talk with you?” Ashley’s friend Eliza asked one afternoon.

“Of course,” Ashley replied, wondering what Eliza could want.

“The diamond your father gave you—can you describe it to me? And can you tell me what that diamond means to you?”

“Why, of course I can,” Ashley replied. She stumbled through a description that sounded strangely vague even to her.



Ashley’s encounter with Eliza awakened Ashley’s sleeping conscience. *I have forgotten to gaze upon the diamond my father gave me! I’ve forgotten to let it bring me joy.* Saddened at her



folly, Ashley slowly walked upstairs and knocked on her father's study.

One look at her father's face showed Ashley that he already knew how she had neglected his treasure.

"Come, my dear, let's go look at the diamond again together," he said as he gently wiped her tears.

With that, Ashley's father led her to the special case in which she kept her diamond. Ashley broke into a fresh set of tears when she saw the diamond. She had forgotten how

beautifully it glittered and glistened! Her heart felt overwhelmed once again by the incredible gift that her father had given her.



"Oh, Father, please help me to never forget!" she whispered, looking up in love and admiration into her father's face.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field". Matthew 13:44

**Source:**

[www.christianperspective.net/articles/stories](http://www.christianperspective.net/articles/stories) ♦

### **Violence against Christians on the rise**

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) 145 cases of violence against Christians in India have been documented in the In the first half of 2021 (from January to June). These cases include three murders.. 22 attacks on churches, 20 cases, in rural areas, of ostracism or social boycott of families who had refused to renounce their Christian faith.

Threats of false accusations of conversions follow, such as stories of social exclusion and discrimination on a religious basis. Madhya Pradesh tops the list with 30 cases in terms of geographical spread. Uttar Pradesh continued to record 22 cases, while Karnataka and Chhattisgarh report 14 and 13 cases each.

The most bizarre incident occurred on March 19, 2021 in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, when four Catholic nuns of the Sacred Heart Society were arrested on their way from Delhi to Odisha state. The incident occurred as the train they were traveling on stopped at Jhansi Railway Station. A group of religious extremists, returning from a pilgrimage, accused them of carrying out unauthorized religious conversions. Police arrived at the scene and arrested the women without paying any attention to their side of the story. About 150 members of radical Hindu nationalist organizations accompanied the women in procession to the police station. The terrified nuns were released at 11.30pm after leaders and civil society organizations convinced the police that the nuns were innocent and had credible documents to prove their story.

The most alarming development was the expansion of the infamous "Freedom of Religion Acts", popularly known as "Anti-conversion laws". Previously approved and applied in 7 Indian states, they have now extended to multiple states ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. These norms target Christian and Muslim minorities, in the latter case under the pretext of curbing the "Love Jihad".

# News Round-Up

*By Fionn Shiner*



A priest who spent two years in captivity with a jihadist group in the Sahel region revealed how he “felt the silence of God” during his two-year ordeal which saw him dragged across Africa

Father Pier Luigi Maccalli from the Society of African Missions (SMA), who was kidnapped in Niger, near the border with Burkina Faso, told Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) how he felt abandoned after his abduction in October 2018.

He said: “I often say that Mary and the Holy Spirit sustained me during that difficult time when I experienced the dark night of the soul and felt the silence of God. Yet at the same time, prayer gave me strength each day.”

Describing the darkest moments of his abduction, Father Maccalli said: “We arrived at a cave, and it was there that they handcuffed me to a tree. It was a very uncomfortable moment. I wept, and I cried out to God, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

He added: “I believe they were well organised, for my abductors in Niger were young Fulani men from an area close to Burkina Faso. The day after I was abducted, I could see them telephoning.

“Without doubt they were giving details about me and were given orders to take me in the direction of Mali. When I asked them where they were taking me, they told me ‘To the Arabs’.

“‘The Arabs’ were people living in Mali. And they did in fact deliver me to these Arabs, who then took me by car into the Sahara Desert.”

Father Maccalli was held by the Group for the Support of Islam and the Muslims which has links to Al Qaeda, the same group that currently hold Sister Gloria Narvaez Argoti, a Colombian nun, kidnapped in Mali in 2017.

Father Maccalli said: “Every day I pray for this religious Sister, who after four and a half years still remains in the hands of her abductors. I suffered two years of imprisonment, and it was a long time. She has spent twice as long - she is a woman, and she is alone.”

Father Maccalli visited Fatima to thank St Mary for his liberation - he prayed the rosary every day which he credits with his release.

He said: “Yes, I made a rosary out of a piece of cloth, from the head covering that protected my head from the sun, and every day I prayed to Our Lady, Untier of Knots, entrusting this great and knotty problem to her and asking her to intercede for my liberation”.

Despite the high level of persecution against Christians in Africa, Father Maccalli was confident that the Church has a bright future on the continent.

He said: “The Church was born of persecution, right from its beginnings. From every trial a new community is born, a new awareness. I’m quite certain that this difficult time...will bear fruits of peace, fruits of liberty, fruits of new life”.

**Source:** Paulo Aido (for Aid to the Church in Need) - [webmaster@indcatholicnews.com](mailto:webmaster@indcatholicnews.com) ♦

## **New bishops appointed**

The Holy Father has appointed Rev Visuvasam Selvaraj (of the clergy of Port Blair) as bishop of the diocese of Port Blair; Rev Savarimuthu Arokiaaraj (of the clergy of Tiruchirapalli) as bishop of the diocese of Tiruchirapalli; and Rev Deepak Valerian Tauro (of the clergy of Muzaffarpur) as Auxiliary Bishop of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Delhi.

*Bishop Visuvasam Selvaraj* was born on 4 January 1966 in Raja Annamalaipuram, in the metropolitan archdiocese of Madras and Mylapore. Since priestly ordination in 1994, Bishop Visuvasam Selvaraj has held the following positions: parish vicar of the Cathedral (1994-1995); diocesan procurator (1995-1998); parish vicar in Mayabunder (1998-1999); director of diocesan Social Services (2001-2006); chancellor and judicial vicar (2001-2019); parish priest in Katchal (2006-2010); parish priest of the Cathedral (2010-2013); rector of the Shrine, member of the diocesan College of Consultors, deputy financial administrator and director of diocesan Social Services (2013-2015); financial administrator of the diocese (2015-2017) and vicar general (2017-2019). Since 2017 he has served as commissioner for Christian Communities and Catechesis and from 2020 to date, diocesan administrator of Port Blair.

*Bishop Savarimuthu Arokiaraj* was born on 24 October 1954 in Lalapettai, in the diocese of Tiruchirapalli. Since priestly ordination in 1981, he has held the following offices: parish vicar of Saint Joseph's Church, Dindigul (1981); parish priest in Ayyampatty (1981-1986) and Udayapatty (1986-1987); secretary of the Commission for the Liturgy of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council (1988-1991, 2002-2008); regional secretary of the Commission for the Liturgy, Tindivanam (1991-1994); diocesan chancellor (2009-2015) and parish priest in Subramaniapuram (2009-2012); teacher of liturgy at Saint Paul's Seminary (2012-2015); parish priest of the Cathedral of Tiruchirapalli (2014-2016); rector of Saint Paul's Seminary (2016-2019) and, since 2019, rector of the Holy Redeemer's Basilica in Tiruchirapalli.

*Bishop Deepak Valerian Tauro* was born on August 2, 1967, in Chikmagalur, Karnataka. After his priestly ordination 1996 he has held the following positions: Parish Vicar in Samastipur (1996-1997) and in Bettiah, Muzaffarpur (1997-1999); Rector of the Minor Seminary of Muzaffarpur (1999-2002) (2005-2007); Secretary of the Bishop of Muzaffarpur (2007-2010); Director of the Diocesan Youth Forum (2007-2011); Regional Secretary of the CDPI - Bihar, Jharkhand & Andaman's Bishops' Council (BIJHAN) (2009-2011); Rector of the Minor Seminary of Muzaffarpur (2010-2011); Lecturer and Spiritual Director of St. Albert's College, Ranchi (2011-2015). From 2012 he was Secretary of Bihar, Jharkhand & Andaman's Bishops' Council (BIJHAN) and from 2015 to 2021 Rector of St. Albert's College, Ranchi. ♦

### **Kerala Church appeals to govt to restore pensions**

Catholic Church officials have opposed the withdrawal of social security pensions to those living in old age homes and other such centers in Kerala.

State authorities based their decision on the argument that the government provides grants to such institutions, so their residents were not entitled to a pension. The state cannot extend double benefits — pension and grant — to those living in such institutions.

Catholic institutions maintain that the pension and grant are two separate things. A grant is paid to an old age home to cover its institutional and maintenance costs, while a pension is paid to an individual as a citizen's basic right.

The concerned institutions called on Kerala's minister for social justice R Bindu recently to present their case. The minister heard them as they appealed to her to intervene and help restore the pension.

Bishop Jose Pulickal of Kanjirapally, who is also chairman of Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) Justice, Peace and Development Commission, said if the government failed to withdraw its order, many old age homes and such other institutions in the state will have to close. The move has badly hit 150,000 disabled and infirm persons living in more than 2,000 centers run by the Catholic Church in Kerala. ♦

### **Ignatian E-book: 'Christ plays in 10,000 places'**

From May 2021 until July 2022, the Society of Jesus is celebrating the Ignatian Year marking the 500th anniversary of St Ignatius' conversion - that fateful day when Ignatius the soldier, struck by a cannonball, began his transformation into Ignatius the pilgrim.

To mark the anniversary, and to celebrate the feast day of St Ignatius Loyola the Jesuits have produced a



free E book. It's called 'Christ plays in 10,000 places' after the Gerard Manley Hopkins poem - with prayers, poems and reflections.

Download the book here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/FcSDJ28>

Source: [independentcatholicnews.com](http://independentcatholicnews.com) 31 July 2021 ♦

### **Buddhist mob attacks church**

Ethnic Christians in a remote, hilly village in Bangladesh are under pressure from Buddhists to renounce their faith after two mob attacks severely damaged a Baptist church.

The Bawm Tribal Baptist Church in Sundrapara village in Rangamati district was attacked twice by dozens of black-masked men, said the church's head pastor Jyotilaso Chakma. The attackers demolished the church's brick wall, windows, doors, tin roof, gate and cross.

The attackers, allegedly radical Buddhists, also threatened Christians in the village to reconvert to Buddhism. Pastor Chakma and a Christian villager said there had been pressure from extremist Buddhists since 30 Buddhist families converted to Christianity in 2008. Most of the families have fled the village fearing attacks.

The southeastern hilly region collectively called Chittagong Hill Tracts has a long history of insurgency and sectarian violence between largely Buddhist ethnic groups and settler Bengali Muslims. ♦

### **Jailed for selling bible players**

Authorities in communist China have jailed four Christians for selling electronic Bible players illegally. Four middle aged men were jailed from 15 months to six years and fined for their involvement in the business in Shenzhen city in southeast China's Guangdong province

They were arrested in July 2020 when police also recovered computers from their company called Life Tree Culture Communication. They faced trial last December but their verdicts were delayed. Their family members and fellow Christians were reportedly threatened not to discuss the case.

China's communist regime has long tolerated production and sales of electronic Bibles, which are popular among Christians. Media reports say things changed in 2018 when the Chinese Communist Party adopted repressive new regulations on religious affairs.

Christians and other religious groups have faced an intensified crackdown from the state since then. ♦

### **Christian group against human trafficking**

A leading Filipino anti-trafficking Christian group has challenged the government of President Rodrigo Duterte to stamp out corruption to tackle human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

During an online seminar to mark the World Day Against Trafficking in Human Persons, the Philippine Interfaith Movement Against Human Trafficking, a forum of Catholic, Protestant and evangelical churches, demanded that Duterte fire officials who take bribes from human traffickers and turn a blind eye.

The group said human trafficking is not only an issue of poverty but of corruption. An estimated 784,000 out of a population of about 102 million Filipinos are living in modern slavery, according to the Global Slavery Index. ♦

## **Holy Father's Prayer Intentions**

### **September 2021: An environmentally sustainable lifestyle**

We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this.

### **October 2021: Missionary disciples**

We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel.

# Permanent activity of missionary formation for PMS National Directions, Year 2021

**"Church's Mission: Media Communication, Charity and Fundraising"** was the main theme discussed during the online formation course for the English-speaking National Directions of the PMS(08-12 March 2021). The course was organized by PMS, Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) and CIAM, in collaboration with the PMS National Direction in Australia. There were 224 participants, connected from 40 different countries around the world.

On the first day, **Fr. Ambrose Pitchaimutchu**, National Director of the PMS in India, gave a talk on "Contextualizing Church's Mission: Communication and Missionary Charity". His speech touched three main themes: the global context in which we live and the Church today and its mission, "mission and communication," and the missionary charity lived as faith that calls to action, lived in one's own personal experience and in communion with local Churches.

At the end of the first day, **Fr. Brian Lucas**, National Director of the PMS in Australia: digital communication in the missionary formation's field; and the importance of identifying the audience and context.

On the second day, **Prof. Cristian Mendoza** of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome, Italy): the conceptual leap from fundraising to faithraising.

**Simone Medri**, director of Communication Team in the PMS Australia: the digital strategies applied to fundraising; and provided a handbook with seven steps to follow.

On the third day, after the speech of the PMS President, **Archbishop Giampietro Dal Toso**, the three **Secretaries General** of the PMS



presented their own Pontifical Society (POPF, POSI, POSPA).

**Sr. Bernadette Mary Reis, fsp**, Dicastery for Communication (Vatican City): "Effectively Communicating Our Mission" with three points of view: strategic, tactical and practical.

On the fourth day, **Rev. Prof. Peter Lah** from the Pontifical Gregorian University: "Fundamentals of Communication." It continued with the presentation of Fides by **Paolo Affatato**, editorial coordinator of Fides News Agency.

On the fifth day, **Bernhard Mitterutzner** from Radio Maria: the values and style, which animate the radio station; **Jean Paul Kayihaura**: Radio Maria fundraising experience presenting "Mariathon," a solidarity race addressed mainly to the African continent. At the end, **Fr. Fabrizio Meroni**, the then PUM Secretary General, made some reflections on the rediscovery of the unique charism of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

**Source:** <https://www.ppoomm.va/en/i-progetti/tutti-i-progetti/2021/permanent-activity-of-missionary-formation-for-pms-national-directions.html>

**"Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation"** Mark 16:15





# St PETER'S PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE

## DEPARTMENT OF MISSIOLOGY

### BANGALORE

( It has the credential of being the First in Asia from 1976 )



### Facilities Available

- ♦ One of the best libraries in Asia.
- ♦ Scholarship and Hostel Facilities.
- ♦ Language course in Latin, French, Italian and German.

### Objectives

- To prepare efficient Secretaries for Commissions of CBCI, CCBI and Regional Episcopal Conferences such as Commission for Proclamation (CCBI), Commission for Interreligious Dialogue (CBCI), Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (CBCI), Commission for Small Christian Communities (CCBI), Commission for Ecology (CCBI)
- To form experts, researchers and formators.
- To prepare professors for Seminaries, Ecclesiastical Institutes and Formation Houses.
- To prepare efficient co-ordinators of the Pastoral Centres.
- To form effective pastors to ably head various commissions of the Pastoral Centres.



### Programme of Study for Licentiate in Missiology

- Introductory Course and Interdisciplinary Methodology (Three Credits)
- Biblical Orientations for Mission (Four Credits)
- Theologies of Mission in the History and Magisterium of Church (Eleven Credits)
- Dialogue with the Non-believers: Faith, Reason and Science (Two Credits)
- Dialogue with the Religions (Eight Credits)
- Dialogue with the Cultures (Nine Credits)
- Dialogue with the Poor (Nine Credits)
- The Triple Dialogue in Praxis (Thirteen Credits)
- Church and Mission (Six Credits)
- Missionary Spirituality (Four Credits)
- Pastoral Dynamics of Mission (Four Credits)
- Seminars (Two Credits)
- Mission Exposure Programmes (Eight Credits)

### Eligibility

- For Licentiate in Missiology  
Bachelor Degree in Theology or equivalent Christian U. G. Studies
- For Doctorate in Missiology  
Licentiate in Missiology or equivalent Christian P. G. Studies

### Professors

Dr Antony Lawrence  
Dr Stany C. Fernandes  
Dr Simon Pinto  
Dr P V Antony  
Dr Sr Stancy, SMI  
Dr Yann Vagneux, MEP  
Dr Jerry Rosario, SJ

Prof. Dr Lucien Legrand, MEP  
Prof. Dr Michael Amaladoss, SJ  
Prof. Dr Felix Wilfred  
Prof. Dr Jacob Parappally, MSFS  
Prof. Dr Maria Arul Raja, SJ  
Prof. Dr S. M. Michael, SVD  
Dr Victor Edwin, SJ

### For Further Information...

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