

PROCLAIM

A Magazine for Missionary Animation

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World

MISSION

Sunday

20 October



**Go and invite everyone
to the banquet.**

Cf. Matthew 22:9

PONTIFICAL MISSION ORGANIZATIONS INDIA

Trains 135 Diocesan Contact Persons for Jubilee 2025 Preparations & Celebrations



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Invitation to the banquet



The call to “Go and invite everyone to the banquet” is the theme of World Mission Day 2024, an observance that underscores the Church's universal mission to evangelize and extend the invitation of salvation to all people. Celebrated globally on the penultimate Sunday

of October, World Mission Day holds particular significance for India, a country rich in cultural diversity and spiritual traditions. This day is not only a call to reflect on the Church's missionary work but also an invitation for India to engage deeply with its own role in the global mission of spreading the Gospel.

The Biblical mandate: the banquet invitation

The theme 'Go and invite everyone to the banquet' is rooted in the parable of the wedding feast as narrated in Matthew 22:1-14. In this parable, Jesus describes a king who prepares a great banquet and sends his servants to invite guests. When the initially invited guests refuse to come, the king extends the invitation to everyone on the streets, emphasizing the inclusivity of God's invitation to His kingdom. This parable highlights the Church's mission to invite all people to partake in the divine banquet of salvation, transcending social, cultural, and geographical boundaries.

World Mission Day: A call to action

World Mission Day, established by Pope Pius XI in 1926, aims to foster a sense of global solidarity in the Church's mission to evangelize. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness, prayer, and financial support for missionary work. The observance underscores the need for Catholics worldwide to embrace their role in the Church's mission, supporting

the efforts to spread the Gospel and serve those in need.

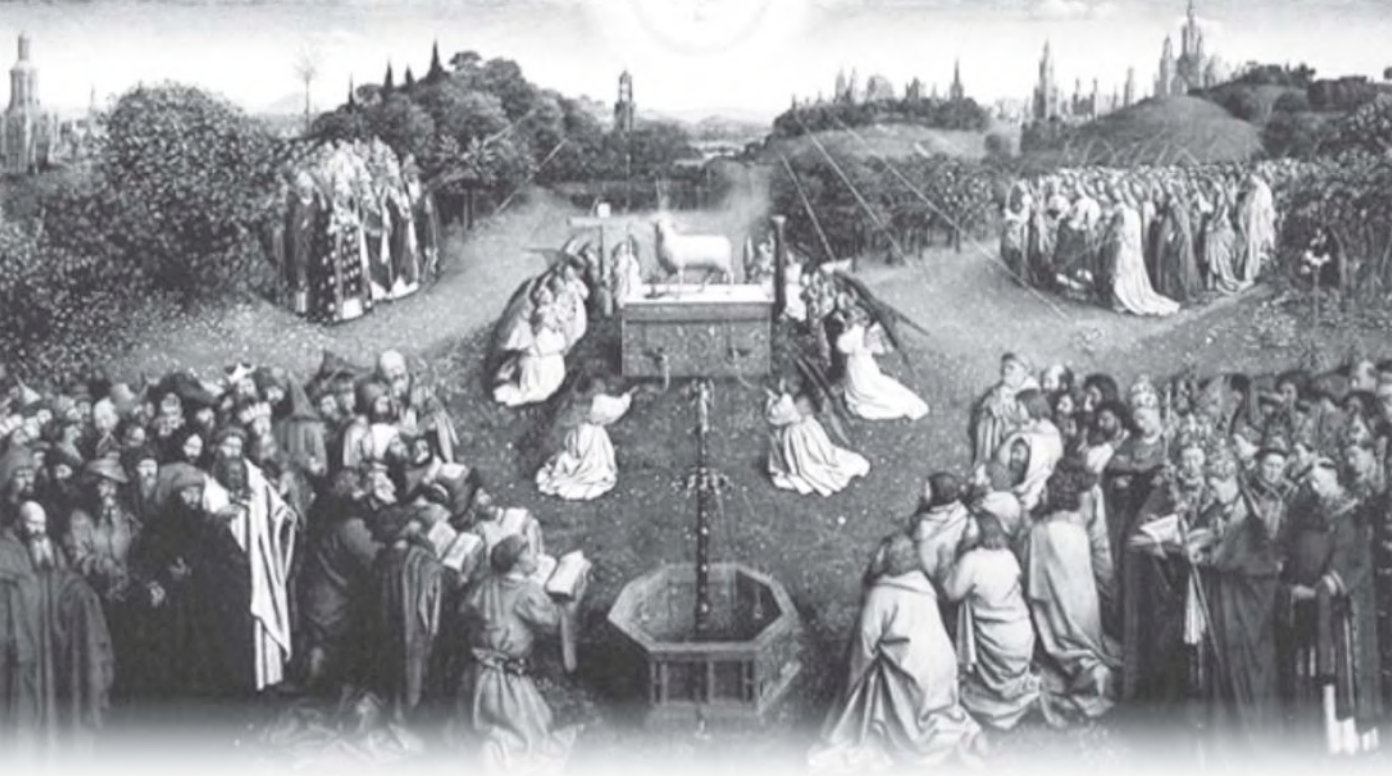
In the Indian context, World Mission Day assumes a unique significance, reflecting the country's diversity of religious and cultural traditions. India's pluralistic spiritual landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for missionary work. The invitation to the banquet becomes particularly poignant as the Church seeks to engage with, and serve, a vast and varied population.

Significance for India

1. Embracing diversity: India's incredible diversity, with its multitude of languages, cultures, and religions, calls for a missionary approach that respects and understands this pluralism. World Mission Day invites the Indian Church to embrace this diversity as a strength, recognizing that the Gospel's invitation is for everyone, regardless of their background. It encourages a missionary spirit that is inclusive and respectful, aiming to build bridges and foster dialogue among different communities.

2. Strengthening local missions: World Mission Day serves as a reminder of the importance of local missionary efforts within India. It highlights the need to support and invigorate mission activities that address the specific needs of local communities, including education, healthcare, and social justice. By focusing on local issues and needs, the Church can make a tangible impact, embodying the call to invite everyone to the banquet by meeting them where they are.

3. Fostering global solidarity: While focusing on local missions, World Mission Day also emphasizes the global dimension of the Church's mission. For India, this means recognizing and supporting the broader global missionary efforts. It involves contributing to



and participating in a worldwide network of faith that extends beyond national boundaries. This solidarity reinforces the idea that the mission of the Church is universal, and every contribution, no matter how small, plays a part in inviting everyone to the divine banquet.

4. Inspiring young missionaries: World Mission Day is an opportunity to inspire and mobilize the younger generation in India to engage in missionary work. By fostering a sense of global mission among youth, the Church can ensure that the spirit of evangelization continues to thrive. Initiatives such as youth missions, volunteer programs, and educational campaigns can empower young people to take an active role in spreading the Gospel and serving their communities.

5. Praying for missionaries: The day also provides a moment to pray for missionaries who are working in various parts of India and beyond. It is a time to support those who have dedicated their lives to the mission of the Church, seeking God's blessings for their

efforts and protection. Prayer is a fundamental aspect of missionary work, providing spiritual strength and guidance to those who undertake the mission of inviting others to the banquet.

Conclusion

World Mission Day offers a profound opportunity for reflection and action, particularly in the diverse and dynamic context of India. The theme 'Go and invite everyone to the banquet' calls the Indian Church to embrace its role in the universal mission of the Church, fostering inclusivity, supporting local and global missions, and inspiring the next generation of missionaries. By engaging deeply with this call, India can contribute to the global mission of spreading the Gospel and extending the invitation of salvation to all, ensuring that the divine banquet of God's grace and love is open to everyone, everywhere.

I invite everyone to partake in the Mission Sunday celebrations and show our solidarity with the Universal Church.

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

National Director (PMO-India)

“Go and invite everyone to the banquet”

Pope's message for Mission Day 20 Oct 2024

The theme I have chosen for this year's World Mission Day is taken from the Gospel parable of the wedding banquet (cf. *Mt 22:1-14*). After the guests refused his invitation, the king, the main character in the story, tells his servants: “Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find” (v. 9). Reflecting on this key passage in the context of the parable and of Jesus' own life, we can discern several important aspects of evangelization. These appear particularly timely for all of us, as missionary disciples of Christ, during this final stage of the synodal journey that, in the words of its motto, “*Communion, Participation, Mission*”, seeks to refocus the Church on her primary task, which is the preaching of the Gospel in today's world.

1. “Go and invite!”

Mission as a tireless going out to invite others to the Lord's banquet

In the king's command to his servants we find two words that express the heart of the mission: the verbs “to go out” and “to invite”.

As for the first, we need to remember that the servants had previously been sent to deliver the king's invitation to the guests (cf. vv. 3-4). Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Tireless! God, great in love and rich in mercy, constantly sets out to encounter all men and women, and to call them to the happiness of his kingdom, even in the face of their indifference or refusal. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and messenger of the Father, went out in search of the lost sheep of the people of Israel and desired to go even further, in order to reach even the most distant sheep (cf. *Jn 10:16*). Both before and after his resurrection, he told his disciples, “Go!”, thus involving them in his own mission (cf. *Lk 10:3; Mk 16:15*). The Church, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the

earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles.



**World
Mission Sunday**

I take this opportunity to thank all those missionaries who, in response to Christ's call, have left everything behind to go far from their homeland and bring the Good News to places where people have not yet received it, or received it only recently. Dear friends, your generous dedication is a tangible expression of your commitment to the mission *ad gentes* that Jesus entrusted to his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (*Mt 28:19*). We continue to pray and we thank God for the new and numerous missionary vocations for the task of evangelization to the ends of the earth.

Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the “crossroads” of today's world. “Today's drama in the Church is that Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out! Often we end up being an ‘imprisoning’ Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as ‘its own’, whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries” (*Address to Participants in the Conference organized by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life*, 18 February 2023). May all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!



To return to the king's command in the parable, the servants are told not only to “go”, but also to “invite”: “Come to the wedding!” (*Mt*

22:4). Here we can see another, no less important, aspect of the mission entrusted by God. As we can imagine, the servants conveyed the king's invitation with urgency but also with great respect and kindness. In the same way, the mission of bringing the Gospel to every creature must necessarily imitate the same "style" of the One who is being preached. In proclaiming to the world "the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 36), missionary disciples should do so with joy, magnanimity and benevolence that are the fruits of the Holy Spirit within them (cf. *Gal* 5:22). Not by pressuring, coercing or proselytizing, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in this way reflecting God's own way of being and acting.

2. "To the marriage feast"

The eschatological and Eucharistic dimension of the mission of Christ and the Church.

In the parable, the king asks the servants to bring the invitation to his son's wedding banquet. That banquet is a reflection of the eschatological banquet. It is an image of ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God, fulfilled even now by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, who has given us life in abundance (cf. *Jn* 10:10), symbolized by the table set with succulent food and with fine wines, when God will destroy death forever (cf. *Is* 25:6-8).

Christ's mission has to do with the fullness of time, as he declared at the beginning of his preaching: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (*Mk* 1:15). Christ's disciples are called to continue this mission of their Lord and Master. Here we think of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the eschatological character of the Church's missionary outreach: "The time for missionary activity extends between the first coming of the Lord and the second..., for the Gospel must be preached to all nations before the Lord shall come (cf. *Mk* 13:10)" (*Ad Gentes*, 9).



We know that among the first Christians missionary zeal had a powerful eschatological dimension. They sensed the urgency of the preaching of the Gospel. Today too it is important to maintain this perspective, since it helps us to evangelize with the joy of those who know that "the Lord is near" and with the hope of those who are pressing forward towards the goal, when all of us will be with Christ at his wedding feast in the kingdom of God. While the world sets before us the various "banquets" of consumerism, selfish comfort, the accumulation of wealth and individualism, the Gospel calls everyone to the divine banquet, marked by joy, sharing, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others.

This fullness of life, which is Christ's gift, is anticipated even now in the banquet of the Eucharist, which the Church celebrates at the Lord's command in memory of him. The invitation to the eschatological banquet that we bring to everyone in our mission of evangelization is intrinsically linked to the invitation to the Eucharistic table, where the Lord feeds us with his word and with his Body and Blood. As Benedict XVI taught: "Every Eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the Eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. *Is* 25:6-9) and described by the New Testament as 'the marriage-feast of the Lamb' (*Rev* 19:9), to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of the saints" (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 31).

Consequently, all of us are called to experience more intensely every Eucharist, in all its dimensions, and particularly its eschatological and missionary dimensions. In this regard, I would reiterate that "we cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people" (*ibid.*, 84). The Eucharistic renewal that many local Churches are laudably promoting in the post-Covid era will also be essential for reviving the missionary spirit in each member of the

faithful. With how much greater faith and heartfelt enthusiasm should we recite at every Mass: “We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again”!

In this year devoted to prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025, I wish to encourage all to deepen their commitment above all to take part in the celebration of Mass and to pray for the Church's mission of evangelization. In obedience to the Saviour's command, she does not cease to pray, at every Eucharistic and liturgical celebration, the “Our Father”, with its petition, “Thy kingdom come”. In this way, daily prayer and the Eucharist in particular make us pilgrims and missionaries of hope, journeying towards everlasting life in God, towards the nuptial banquet that God has prepared for all his children.

3. “Everyone”

The universal mission of Christ's disciples in the fully synodal and missionary Church

The third and last reflection concerns the recipients of the King's invitation: “everyone”. As I emphasized, “This is the heart of mission: that 'all', excluding no one. Every mission of ours, then, is born from the heart of Christ in order that he may draw all to himself” (*Address to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Missionary Societies, 3 June 2023*). Today, in a world torn apart by divisions and conflicts, Christ's Gospel remains the gentle yet firm voice that calls individuals to encounter one another, to recognize that they are brothers and sisters, and to rejoice in harmony amid diversity. “God our Saviour desires everyone to be saved and come



to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). Let us never forget, then, that in our missionary activities we are asked to preach the Gospel to all:

“Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, [we] should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 14).

Christ's missionary disciples have always had a heartfelt concern for all persons, whatever their social or even moral status. The parable of the banquet tells us that, at the king's orders, the servants gathered “all whom they found, both good and bad” (Mt 22:10). What is more, “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Lk 14:21), in a word, the least of our brothers and sisters, those marginalized by society, are the special guests of the king. The wedding feast of his Son that God has prepared remains always open to all, since his love for each of us is immense and unconditional. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that

everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have life eternal” (Jn 3:16). Everyone, every man and every woman, is invited by God to partake of his grace, which transforms and saves. One need simply say “yes” to this gratuitous divine gift, accepting it and allowing oneself be transformed by it, putting it on like a “wedding robe” (cf. Mt 22:12).

The mission for all requires the commitment of all. We need to continue our journey towards a fully synodal and missionary Church in the service of the Gospel. Synodality is essentially missionary and, vice versa, mission is always synodal. Consequently, close missionary cooperation is today all the more urgent and necessary, both in the universal Church and in the particular Churches. In the footsteps of the Second Vatican Council and my Predecessors, I recommend to all dioceses throughout the world the service of the Pontifical Mission Societies. They represent the primary means “by which Catholics are imbued from infancy with a truly universal and missionary outlook and [are] also a means for



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Heart of the Mission: sharing the Good News

By Anthony Cardinal Poola*

Introduction

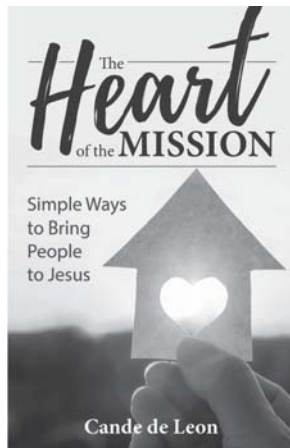
At the very heart of the Church's mission lies a profound and unifying call: to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people. This mission, central to Christian identity and practice, is not merely a set of tasks assigned to a select few; rather, it is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a follower of Christ. The essence of mission is deeply rooted in the command of Jesus to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (cf. Mt 28:19), and it reflects the Church's commitment to evangelize and bear witness to the transformative power of the Gospel.

The essence of mission in the Church

The concept of mission is deeply embedded in the life and teachings of the Church. It is an expression of the Church's intrinsic nature as the Body of Christ, called to continue His work on earth. Mission is not an optional activity but the very essence of Christian life. The heart of mission beats with the desire to proclaim the message of salvation, to heal the broken-hearted, and to bring hope to the marginalized.

1. The Gospel as the core message: At its core, the mission of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. This message is one of redemption, grace, and eternal life. Sharing the Good News involves not only speaking about Christ but also embodying His message through acts of love, justice,

and compassion. Pope Francis emphasizes this, stating, "The Church exists to evangelize. Everything else is secondary."



2. A Call to All Christians: Mission is not confined to ordained ministers or professional missionaries; it is a call to every Christian. The Church teaches that all baptized individuals share in the mission of Christ, each according to their unique gifts and circumstances. Pope Francis captures this universal call succinctly: "Missionary activity is the fundamental task of the Church. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus." This universal call to mission is articulated in the Second Vatican

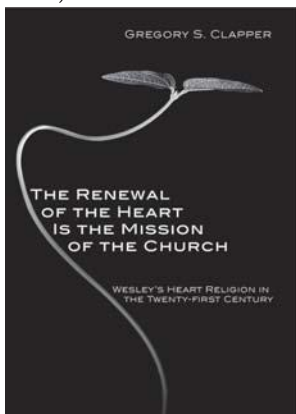
Council's document *Lumen Gentium*, which emphasizes that the laity are called to witness to Christ in their everyday lives and to participate actively in the Church's mission.

Every Christian as a missionary

The call to mission is a call to every believer. Each Christian is invited to participate in the mission of the Church by witnessing to Christ in various aspects of life. This universal vocation to mission can be understood through several key dimensions:

1. Witness Through Daily Life: For most Christians, mission is lived out in the ordinary moments of daily life. It is in the way one interacts with family, colleagues, and neighbours that the essence of Christian witness is revealed. Living out the Gospel message in everyday actions—through kindness, integrity, and compassion - demonstrates the transformative power of faith. Pope Francis encourages this approach, stating, "Every Christian should be an evangelizer. By our actions, we can reflect God's love and grace."

2. Proclaiming the Good News: While actions often speak louder than words, proclaiming the



Gospel through verbal witness remains crucial. This can take many forms, from personal conversations about faith to public speaking and social media engagement. Each Christian is encouraged to share their faith story and the message of Jesus in a way that is authentic and respectful. Pope Francis reminds us, “To evangelize is to be a witness to the joy of knowing Jesus. It's not about making proselytes but sharing joy.”

3. Serving Others: Mission is closely tied to service. Jesus' life was marked by service to others, especially the poor and marginalized. Christians are called to continue this mission by engaging in acts of service, advocating for social justice, and addressing the needs of the vulnerable. By serving others, Christians not



only help to meet immediate needs but also offer a tangible expression of God's love. Pope Francis highlights this connection: “The Church's mission is to be at

the service of others. This includes working for justice, peace, and the protection of the poor and the marginalized.”

4. Living a Life of Holiness: A key aspect of Christian witness is living a life that reflects the values of the Gospel. This includes striving for personal holiness, ethical behaviour, and integrity. When Christians live in accordance with the teachings of Christ, their lives become a powerful testimony to the truth of the Gospel. Pope Francis underscores this: “Holiness is the fruit of a life lived in accordance with the Gospel, and it is our greatest witness to the world.”

The global dimension of mission

While mission starts at the personal and local level, it also has a global dimension. The Church's mission extends to all corners of the world, addressing the needs and opportunities for evangelization in diverse contexts. Global



mission involves cross-cultural interactions, supporting international aid and development, and engaging with global issues from a Christian perspective.

Empowering the next generation

Empowering young people to embrace their role in the mission is crucial for the future of the Church. By fostering a sense of global solidarity, encouraging participation in missionary activities, and providing opportunities for faith formation, the Church can ensure that the mission continues to thrive. The next generation of Christians must be equipped to witness to Christ in a rapidly changing world, adapting the message of the Gospel to contemporary challenges while remaining true to its core truths.

Conclusion

The heart of mission is fundamentally about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people. This call to evangelize is at the core of Christian identity and is a universal vocation that encompasses every aspect of life. As every Christian is a missionary, the mission of the Church is realized through personal witness, acts of service, and a commitment to living out the Gospel. By embracing this call, believers contribute to the ongoing mission of Christ, bringing hope, love, and redemption to a world in need of the transformative power of the Good News. As Pope Francis aptly puts it, “The Church is a missionary by nature. It is in our nature to go out and share the love of God with the world.”

** The author is the Archbishop of Hyderabad, the Chairman of the Telugu Catholic Bishops' Council (TCBC), and a Member of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. ♦*

Mission Sunday

A global call to evangelize

By Archbishop Arokia Sebastin Durairaj SVD*

Introduction

Mission Sunday, celebrated on the penultimate Sunday of October, stands as a beacon in the Church's liturgical calendar, emphasizing the vital call to evangelize and support global missionary endeavours. This observance, officially known as “World Mission Sunday”, serves as a reminder of the Church's universal mission to spread the Gospel and support the mission of Christ across the globe. It unites Catholics worldwide in a common purpose: to pray for, support, and actively engage in the mission of spreading the Christian faith.

Historical overview

The origins of Mission Sunday can be traced back to the early 20th century. The idea of a universal mission awareness day was first proposed by Pope Pius XI in 1926, during a period when the Church was increasingly focusing on global outreach. The Holy Father's encyclical, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, urged for a collective effort in supporting the Church's missions. This initiative culminated in the establishment of Mission Sunday by Pope Pius XI in 1926, aiming to create a specific day each year to encourage prayer, reflection, and financial support for missionary work.

Mission Sunday was officially integrated into the Church's liturgical calendar in 1927, with a focus on raising awareness about the importance of global missions and supporting the work of missionaries worldwide. This day was intended not only to celebrate the fruits of missionary work but also to address the challenges faced by missionaries and the communities they serve.

Significance of Mission Sunday

Mission Sunday holds profound significance within the Church's liturgical calendar. It is a time for Catholics to come together, not only in

prayer but also in practical support for the global mission. The significance of Mission Sunday can be explored through several key aspects:

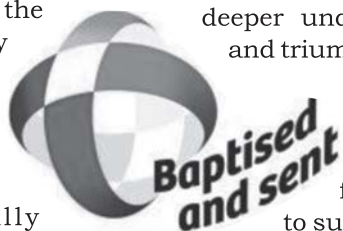
1. Global unity in mission: Mission Sunday transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, uniting Catholics from diverse backgrounds in a common mission. It emphasizes that the call to evangelize is a universal one, reaching every corner of the globe. This unity highlights the Church's commitment to the Great Commission given by Christ to go forth and make disciples of all nations (cf. Mt 28:19-20).

2. Prayer and reflection: On Mission Sunday, the faithful are encouraged to engage in prayer and reflection, focusing on the needs of missionaries and the people they serve. This day provides an opportunity for Catholics to pray for the success of missionary efforts, the safety of missionaries, and the spiritual and material needs of mission territories. It fosters a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs of missionary work.

3. Financial and practical support: Mission Sunday serves as a platform for raising funds and resources to support missionary activities. The collections taken during Masses on this day are designated for the Pontifical Mission Societies, which are responsible for distributing financial aid to mission projects worldwide. This support is crucial for sustaining and expanding missionary efforts, ensuring that resources are available for vital projects such as education, healthcare, and evangelization.

Uniting Catholics worldwide

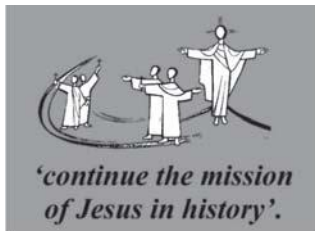
Mission Sunday exemplifies the Church's global outreach, demonstrating how a single day can mobilize Catholics around the world to



contribute to a common goal. Through liturgies, educational materials, and special events, the Church fosters a sense of global solidarity and shared responsibility for the mission of spreading the Gospel.

The day's observance includes the distribution of materials that highlight the specific needs of missions, and the achievements made possible through collective support. By engaging in these activities, Catholics are reminded of their role in the universal mission and are provided with tangible ways to contribute.

Moreover, Mission Sunday enhances awareness about the diverse contexts in which missionaries work, from remote villages to urban centres. This awareness promotes a greater appreciation for the Church's missionary efforts and encourages individuals



to consider their own role in supporting these endeavours.

Conclusion

Mission Sunday is more than just a day on the Church calendar; it is a profound call to action for every Catholic. It is a day to celebrate the Church's global mission, to reflect on the importance of evangelization, and to support those who dedicate their lives to spreading the Gospel. By uniting Catholics worldwide in prayer, reflection, and financial support, Mission Sunday underscores the universal nature of the Church's mission and the shared responsibility of all believers in advancing the mission of Christ.

In embracing the spirit of Mission Sunday, Catholics are reminded of their call to be active participants in the Church's mission, whether through prayer, support, or personal involvement. It is a call to recognize the global dimension of the Church's work and to contribute to the advancement of the Gospel across all nations, bringing the light of Christ to every corner of the world.

** The author is the Archbishop of Bhopal and the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Proclamation ♦*

Continued from Page 6: "Go and invite everyone to the banquet"



instituting an effective collecting of funds for all the missions, each according to its needs" (*Ad Gentes*, 38). For this reason, the collections of World Mission Day in all the local Churches are entirely destined to the universal fund of solidarity that the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith then distributes in the Pope's name for the needs of all the Church's missions. Let us pray that the Lord may guide us and help us to be a more synodal and a more missionary Church (cf. *Homily for the Concluding Mass of the Ordinary*

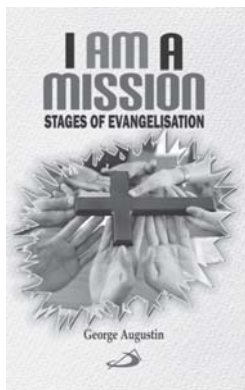
General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 29 October 2023).

Finally, let us lift our gaze to Mary, who asked Jesus to perform his first miracle precisely at a wedding feast, in Cana of Galilee (cf. *Jn* 2:1-12). The Lord offered to the newlyweds and all the guests an abundance of new wine, as a foreshadowing of the nuptial banquet that God is preparing for all at the end of time. Let us implore her maternal intercession for the evangelizing mission of Christ's disciples in our own time. With the joy and loving concern of our Mother, with the strength born of tenderness and affection (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288), let us go forth to bring to everyone the invitation of the King, our Saviour. Holy Mary, Star of Evangelization, pray for us! ♦

Evangelization - our first priority

*By Bishop Robert Miranda**

We live in a world where people are more often after the material comforts than the spiritual. Unfortunately, the religiosity we practice today does not touch the core of our



being which always desires a touch of the Divine. Our social and religious celebrations with great pomp and extravaganza do make us happy but only for a moment. As they do not touch our soul, life becomes empty. This is how we Christians actually are --- mediocre, good Christians but not an evangelizing community.

We go to church, which is a meeting place, for diverse reasons, but sadly often not so much for the purpose of meeting God. While sacramental life is very important to meet the Lord as community, we must not forget to make efforts to meet Him in silent personal prayer, daily reading of the Word of God and meditation. This makes a personal encounter with God possible. Without a personal encounter we cannot be witnesses, we cannot proclaim the Good News to people around us.

'Go and invite everyone to the banquet' is the key sentence of the parable (Mt 22: 1-14) Pope Francis, in his message for Mission Sunday 2024, speaks of the urgency of proclaiming the Good News to all people in the world. Indeed a very inspiring message. But how can we evangelize people and 'invite everyone to the banquet' without a personal encounter experience of the Lord in our life?

The Lord Jesus before ascending back to the Father gave us the mission mandate: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I

have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). Over the past 2000 years the Church has tried to fulfill this mandate by direct evangelization as well as witnessing through various charitable services.

Essentially, only a person who has an encounter with the Lord can proclaim the Good News of the Lord openly and boldly. The apostles were living witnesses of the life and teachings of the Lord. Having been chosen by God they lived with the Lord for three years. They were witnesses of all that Jesus said and did in his life. They were witnesses of His passion, death and resurrection. Jesus before ascending to the Father gave them the command to go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel. They also received the anointing by the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost. Filled with this experience of the Spirit they went far and wide proclaiming the gospel. While proclaiming the gospel to the nations they were persecuted, severely tormented and put to death, but filled with the Spirit they endured the suffering. In their suffering and death they became all the more victorious.

With these thoughts in mind let me now share with you some of my experiences of training our people as evangelizers in our diocese.

The spirit of evangelization instilled in children: In our diocese we do the best possible to set the children on the sure foundation of faith. This we do by a process of transmitting faith through regular catechism and formation of groups of Holy Childhood Association with the motto "Children helping children". In these



groups children pray for the missionaries, contribute their mite for mission work. As members of the Holy Childhood group they also begin to evangelize/share the Good News with their companions.

We send them regularly articles on the missions and life of saints through a monthly bulletin. This inspires them. Thus cultivating missionary

zeal they become 'little missionaries' in their childhood itself. It has been a wonderful experience for me to see the enthusiasm and overwhelming desire of the children to be 'little missionaries' actively involved in the evangelization ministry.



Jesus Youth Movement is one of the recent youth movements aimed at making youth friends of Jesus, and this friendship with Jesus makes them reach out to the youth on the peripheries and bring them closer to Jesus. It's amazing to see thousands of youths --- humble, spirit-filled and close to Jesus --- making a commitment to Jesus and evangelization for life. They have brought a renewal in the church wherever the movement has spread among the youth.



Evangelization through social media: Social Media is another way the Church must begin to spread the Good

News to people in their day-to-day life. Social Media should be not just a means for evangelization but a way to change life. We need to engage our youth in this ministry of spreading the Good News through the social media among children, youth and adults in creative ways making the best use of artificial intelligence.

Lay evangelizers: Pope Francis has opened up the mission field to all Christians when he said we are all called to be 'missionary disciples'. We are all Christians and by our very baptism we are called to be missionaries. He calls the concept of sharing our encounter with Jesus Christ using the means available to us 'missionary discipleship'. This profound concept that Pope Francis espouses is relatively simple 'The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized; every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in Evangelization. Indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out to proclaim that love.' Once we have encountered Jesus Christ and his merciful love, we are called to bring that encounter to others.

By his own personal example Pope Francis defines mission saying, "I am a Christian; therefore I am the mission". It's a great shift Church is making in defining evangelization. 'I am a mission on this earth, that's the reason I am in this world' (EV 273). This requires us to be in communion with the Lord always through prayer, sacraments and get rooted in Him. Our heart's only desire ought to be that Jesus should shine to the world around me, through me. Nourished by God's Word and sacraments, we become powerful witnesses of the Lord wherever we go, whatever we do. In all that I seek to do in life Jesus becomes first and Jesus becomes the last.

Unless Jesus becomes first in our life and always the only reason for our existence, it is not possible for us to be part of the mission of the Lord. Someone has said, the church has made us members and not evangelizers. We also have many institutions and services which are run efficiently. But no evangelization is taking place. Therefore, we must focus on the evangelization perspective, organizing a special training for the staff that they may become evangelizers and not mere employees, however good they may be. The parishes should have spiritual inputs on the importance of missions throughout the year and



the evangelization perspective must be reinforced in our children, youth, women's groups and BECs and make the entire community an evangelizing community, every family a witnessing family and every individual Christian an evangelizer.

* The writer is the Bishop of Gulbarga, Karnataka ♦

The evangelising mission of all Christ's Faithful

By Fr Dr Antony Lawrence*

Jesus' disciples, co-workers of the Messianic Mission

Trying to explore the biblical foundation for the mission of all Christ's Faithful, we clearly see in the New Testament that Jesus makes his disciples as partners in his messianic mission, irrespective who they are without discrimination. He does not do it alone. He makes it clear that it is a corporate project. After a critical analysis of the text on the Call of the disciples, Lucien Legrand makes this point saying that Jesus shares his messianic mission with his disciples. The term 'disciple' is therefore an inadequate word to refer to them. For their call not only makes them disciples but co-workers and associates in his mission. They are to participate in Jesus' messianic ministry of healing, teaching etc. He states: "The messianic advent of the kingdom is the collective responsibility of the small remnant of the people of the poor." Indisputably, in the opinion of Legrand, Jesus' understanding of the project is corporate. He goes on to stress in an article that: "In theological terms, we could say that Christology and ecclesiology are not two different entities somehow connected. They belong together. The *ekklesiā* of the disciples belongs to the Incarnation and in its corporate identity, the Incarnation includes an *ekklesiā* of responsible partners." The privilege of rendering selfless service to God's reign is not something that is reserved only to the chosen people.

Pauline mission model in the "houses"

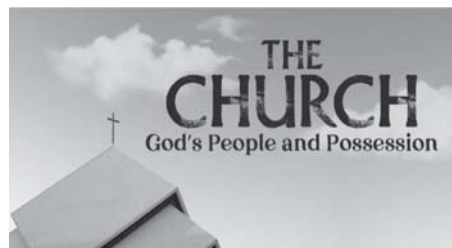
The evangelising mission of Christ's Faithful has also a strong foundation in the Pauline mission models. In the New Testament, the Church is the house, *Ecclesia*; or *vice versa* is also true (1 Pet 2: 5; 4: 17; 1 Tim 3: 15; Heb 10: 21). In the New Testament, the Church is the house of God and it was supposed that everyone, namely, relatives, slaves, guests and

often friends, without any discrimination generally belonged to the 'house'. Particularly, Paul would call *ecclesia* the Christian

community gathered in the "houses". This is the context that should help our understanding, when we hear that first Christians came together in "houses" (Acts 2: 26; 5: 42). In Acts, we also read about the conversion of the entire households (11: 14; 16: 15, 31, 33). That bears witness to the fact that the Church in the New Testament which was called a "house" has served as powerful means of evangelization.

It is true that Pauline mission strategy, for the most part, consisted of discourses of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13: 16-47), Lystra (14: 15-17), Athens (17: 22-31) and the debates conducted for two years in the "lecture hall of Tyrannus" at Ephesus (19: 9-10). Nevertheless, we will not be doing justice to Paul's mission strategy, if we ignore that there is also the other side of the picture, that is, the mission "from house to house". This mission "from house to house" has all its inspiration from the Jewish missionary drive of the time, says Legrand. He further says: "The missionary spirit of Judaism would be so to say the matrix of the early Christian mission...It was a "mission" exercised not through organized activism but through the grapevine of

professional, social, familial relationships." This "house to house" communication of the message is equally evidenced in the Pauline letters, where the house appears as a key element of the apostolic strategy. To take a quick look at the references to "houses" in Pauline epistles, we have them in Rom 16: 3-5, 10, 11, 23; 1 Cor 1: 11, 1: 16; 16: 19; Phil 4: 22; Philemon 2: and Col 4: 15. A closer study of these texts would reveal





since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord". (EG. 3)

This has become an absolute imperative, given the fact that the Church has come to realize strongly that her mission is not restricted to just expansion of the Church and her membership. Rather, it covers every realm of human existence and even of the entire creation. Following the principle of incarnation by which Word became flesh in order to make the humanity divine, religion

has to become secular to make the secular sacred. That is the reason why the Second Vatican Council's Doctrinal Constitution on the Church articulates clearly that: "The laity is called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth." Evangelization is not restricted to the spiritual realm alone but extends to every aspect of life. The laity are the leaven in the world and are capable of effecting transformation of the world. (AG. 15) They will then become the Church's voice in the secular world and vice versa.

that the "houses" did play a key role in the early Christian communities in evangelising the households (cf Rom 16: 3-5; 1 Cor 16: 19).

For instance, the homes of Priscilla and Aquila, Gaius, Stephanas and Philemon extended hospitality to the local Christian community. Presumably, the gatherings in their homes could not have been just for 'chat about the weather and the local gossip'. They must have been to praise the Lord, celebration of the Word and the Lord's Supper. Paul adopted the house not only as a shelter but as a base for his ministry, cooperating in many forms with his apostolic endeavours. His mission strategy of making the Greco-Roman households a partner in his ministry, or vehicles of the Gospel message, should be a great source of inspiration and guidance for us who, in these days, reflect along with the universal Church on the mission of the synodal Church and the mission of all Christ's Faithful.



Therefore, Church has to provide adequate space for their mission "so that according to their abilities and needs of the times, they can zealously participate in the saving work of the Church." (LG. 33) FABC's insistence on the mission of all Christ's

Faithful is very clear: "We must evolve participative Church structures in order to use the personal talents and skills of lay women and men." "We need local Churches that actively encourage the involvement of its laity whose charisms, energy, enthusiasm and abilities are not yet fully accepted and realized."

Empowering the leadership of Christ's Faithful

Therefore, a changed understanding of Christ's Faithful and their role is crucially imperative in our present scenario. Church leadership should include also lay leadership, as everyone in the Church participates in the

The Church as the People of God

Understandably, Church's evangelizing mission calls for declericalizing and secularizing the Church today. The laity are the Church – the 'People of God' and they are the Church-in-the world, and in civil society; they can give credible witness to the world through their life and action in the civil society. Pope Francis makes it clear in the opening pages of his *Evangelii Gaudium*:

"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,

...Continued on Page 17

Proclaim. Sept - Oct 2024

A missionary synodal Church

as envisaged in *Instrumentum Laboris*

By Fr Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose*

Introduction

A working document, also known as *Instrumentum Laboris* (IL), was released on July 9 by the General Secretariat for the Synod. It will guide discussions during the Synod's second session from October 2 to 27. The theme for this session is "How to be a missionary synodal Church." The discussions are the next step in the synod's overarching theme: "For a synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission." The first session focused on "How does a synodal Church describe itself?", while the upcoming session will consider "How to be a synodal Church in mission?" We can expect a further deepening of the missionary understanding of the Church, a better focus on the missionary practices of a synodal Church, and the proposal for some changes in Canon Law as well, which would enhance meaningful lay participation in the mission of the Church. The IL, based on the Synthesis Report (SR) after the first session and on further consultation with local Churches, listed several shared proposals and concerns for Canon Law that should be addressed at the second session.

Mission by lay Faithful through stably instituted "Lay Ministries"

Institutionalized Lectorates (IL) highlights the emphasis on the conferred lay ministry, in which the Bishop bestows the ministry upon lay members only once in their lifetime through a prescribed liturgical rite following thorough discernment and suitable preparation (no. 29-30). After *Motu Proprio Ministeria quaedam* (1972), Pope Paul VI envisaged many more ministries to be stably exercised by the lay

faithful after an installation, apart from lector and acolyte (can. 230). They can be called baptismal ministries to indicate their common root (baptism) (cann. 204, 208) and to distinguish them from ordained ministries rooted in the sacrament of Order. IL introduces that men and women exercise the ministry of coordinating a small church community, the ministry of leading moments of prayer (at funerals or otherwise), extraordinary ministry of communion (IL 29, cann. 910 §2; 230 §2), or other services not necessarily liturgical. The Latin and Eastern Canon Law already prescribe that lay faithful may also administer

baptism (can. 861 §2) in extraordinary situations. According to the Canon Law of the Latin Church, the Bishop may delegate lay faithful to assist at marriages (can. 1112 §1). However, it is useful to continue reflecting on how to entrust these ministries to the laity in a more stable form (IL 29). This reflection should be accompanied by further consideration of how the Church can promote more forms of lay ministry, including outside the liturgical sphere. In 2021, Pope Francis established a stable lay ministry of catechists (Apostolic Letter *Antiquum Ministerium*), empowering the lay faithful as catechists (can. 776). A mandate from the legitimate authority must define the

time and manner of their exercise. Some theological and canonical questions concerning the question of the ordination of women to the diaconate (IL 17) have been entrusted to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (Study Group No. 5). Like charisms, ministries must also be



recognised and promoted and valued (LG 30).

Mission by decision-making/taking process through consent and consultation

It is crucial to promote a synodal Church by involving everyone in the decision-making process in the missionary Church. As per Canon Law, in several situations, superiors must consult before making decisions for carrying out the mission. This means that the authority should pay attention to the consultation or advice received with regard to the mission they are to render. While the consultative opinion does not bind the authority, they should not disregard it without an overriding reason if there is a general agreement (can. 127 §2, 2°). Ignoring the general agreement would damage the synodal bond that unites them. In the Church, exercising authority does not mean imposing arbitrary will but rather serving as a moderating force in the common search for what the Spirit requires in service of the unity of the People of God. Secondly, an orientation that emerges in the consultative process as the outcome of proper discernment, especially if carried out by the participatory bodies of the local Church, cannot be ignored, for it is done in obedience to the Spirit. states, “any opposition between consultation and deliberation is therefore inadequate: in the Church, deliberation takes place with the help of all, never without the pastoral authority that takes decisions by virtue of its office. For this reason, the recurring formula in the Code of Canon Law, which speaks of a 'consultative vote only' (*tantum consultivum*), diminishes the value of consultation and should be corrected.” Moreover, no. 71 of IL exhorts the effective participation of women in drafting and decision-making and taking process for the missionary activities in the Church, as called for in reports received from the Bishops' Conferences across the globe.

Diocesan and parish pastoral and financial councils in Mission

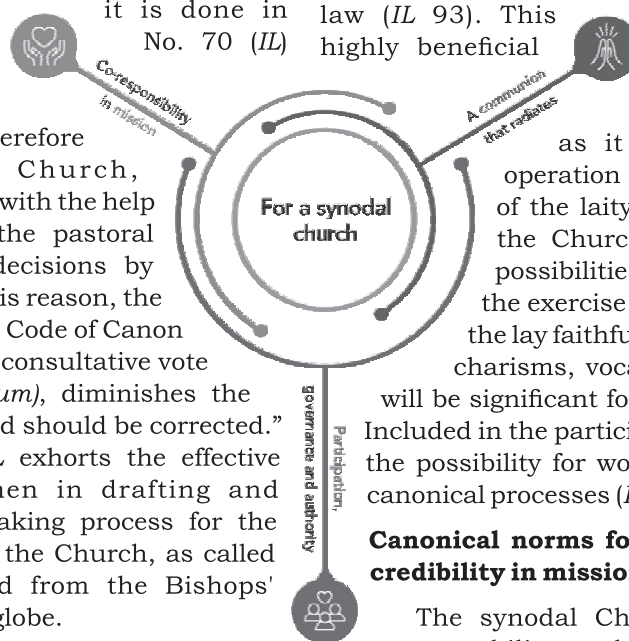
Bishops' Conferences emphasize the importance of establishing Diocesan and Parish

pastoral and financial councils (cann. 492, 511, 536, 537) in the Church's mission. These councils are essential for planning, executing, and evaluating missionary and pastoral activities to improve them (IL 91). Canon Law already envisages these structures. The appropriate adaptations could prove to be even more suitable for giving a concrete form to the missionary synodal approach. The need to reshape the profile of these bodies and their *modus operandi* in order to move in this direction is underscored. Significantly, this will require attention to how members are appointed, aiming to ensure that their composition reflects that of the community they serve (diocese/parish) to promote a culture of transparency and accountability credibly. It is, therefore, necessary that the majority of members are not chosen by the authority but designated in another way, effectively expressing the reality of the community or local Church (IL 92). Finally, it is strongly emphasised that these councils (diocesan and parish pastoral councils – cann. 511, 536), whose establishment is currently optional /discretionary, should be made mandatory by law (IL 93). This initiative will be highly beneficial if it receives a positive nod during the second session,

as it would enhance co-operation and co-responsibility of the laity in the governance of the Church (can. 129 §2). The possibilities of participation and the exercise of co-responsibility by the lay faithful, in the variety of their charisms, vocations and ministries, will be significant for the synodal Church. Included in the participatory avenues is also the possibility for women judges in all the canonical processes (IL 16).

Canonical norms for accountability and credibility in missionary activities

The synodal Church must prioritize accountability and transparency at all levels, including authority structures, in order to be welcoming. This goes beyond addressing sexual and financial abuse to encompass pastoral plans, evangelization,



missionary methods, and respecting human dignity, such as ensuring fair working conditions within Church institutions.

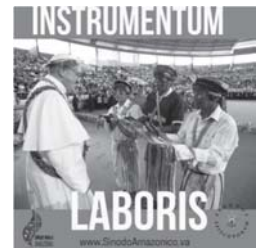


Accountability should not only be towards superiors but also towards the community with transparency being essential in exercising authority. Regular evaluation of missionary and ministerial responsibilities is necessary to foster growth and improve service (IL 76). In addition to observing what is already provided for in the canonical norms regarding control criteria and mechanisms, it is up to the local Churches and their groupings to develop procedures for effective transparency and accountability in missionary activities, considering the civil regulatory framework, societal expectations, and available expertise. Essential canonical measures include the functioning of financial affairs of various councils, publishing annual financial statements, reporting on mission performance, safeguarding initiatives, promoting women's participation in missionary activities, and periodically evaluating those in ministry and leadership in the mission-oriented activities. These steps are crucial for the

credibility and implementation of the synodal process (IL 77-79). How the post-synodal environment will introduce canonical provisions to address these concerns remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The call to be missionary disciples is based on our common baptismal identity and is rooted in the diversity of the contexts in which the Church finds herself. This *Instrumentum laboris* proposes ideas to bring the Church closer to people, promote the participation of all lay faithful in the mission and missionary activities of the Church through various ecclesial structures, and envision various stably instituted lay ministries for missionary activities. It also highlights the importance of women's roles and the need for transparency and accountability, among other themes. As mentioned above, the imperative to envision canonical norms that empower these visions will undoubtedly be a decisive topic of discussion during the upcoming session in October. We must pray earnestly and observe how the Holy Spirit intends to guide the Catholic Church forward. Should it align with the Divine will, it will come to fruition.



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Continued from Page 14: The evangelising mission of all Christ's Faithful

threefold ministry of Jesus Christ through Baptism and Confirmation. The Second Vatican Council's Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* No. 7 says that their specific leadership is to be exercised in the temporal area, namely, media, culture, economics and politics. (Cf also. GS. 19 & LG. 31) But the reality today is, 'the visible face of the church in India are the priests and the bishops'. Despite so much of insistence on the laity in the documents, they have not become the Church. Those documents remain only as doctrines, yet to be materialized. If the above dimension is rediscovered, then our attention will be on the

Church-in-this-world and not on 'intra-ecclesial' affairs. (LG. 31 & 32)

The leadership of all believers is based also on the fact that the Holy Spirit has conferred on them a plurality of talents, gifts and charisms. Failing to incorporate into the life and governance of the Church these talents goes against the Spirit. It also deprives the community of these talents. A good leader in the Church will promote and encourage the contribution of all believers, each one with his or her charism, for the building up of the Church and for the service of the Kingdom of God. ♦

Evangelization through respectful dialogue

By Fr A Samson Arockiadass*

Introduction

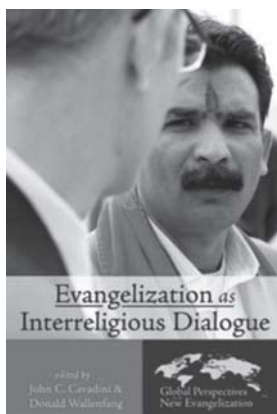
In an increasingly pluralistic world, the mission of the Church faces new and complex challenges. The call to evangelize remains a fundamental aspect of the Church's mission, yet it must be approached with sensitivity and respect, particularly in contexts where multiple faiths coexist. Evangelization today is not merely about proclaiming the Gospel, but also about engaging in respectful and open dialogue with people of other faiths. This dialogue, when approached with humility and a genuine desire to understand, can itself become a powerful form of evangelization. By fostering mutual respect and exploring common spiritual ground, the Church can both remain true to its Catholic faith and contribute to greater understanding and peace among diverse religious communities.

The role of dialogue in mission

Dialogue plays a crucial role in the Church's mission, especially in a world marked by religious diversity. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), emphasizes that "an attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions." This openness does not mean compromising the core tenets of the Catholic faith but rather entering conversations with a spirit of respect, seeking to build bridges rather than walls.

1. Dialogue as evangelization: Dialogue, when undertaken with sincerity, is itself a form of evangelization. It allows the Church to witness to the Gospel in a way that is respectful of others' beliefs while offering the Christian message with humility and love. Through dialogue, the Church can demonstrate that the message

of Christ is one of love, peace, and mutual respect. As the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* states, "The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God... and they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees." This document encourages the Church to enter into dialogue with people of other faiths, recognizing the shared search for truth and understanding.



2. Inter-textual reading of Sacred Scriptures: One effective starting point for interfaith dialogue is the intertextual reading of Sacred Scriptures. By exploring the common themes, values, and stories found in different religious texts, participants can find shared ground that fosters mutual respect and understanding. For example, by engaging in discussions on the Wisdom Literature, interfaith dialogue can reveal the shared heritage and values that different faiths hold, paving the way for deeper conversations about faith, ethics, and the human experience. To cite an example, the work of Yesu Karunanidhi to study Ecclesiastes 11:4 -12:8, a Jewish (Christian) Hebrew Text in comparison with Paṭṭinattār's *Uṭalkūrruvaṇṇam*, a Śaivite (Hindu) Tamil Text, has given a methodology to engage in such a dialogue.

Balancing fidelity to the Catholic Faith with openness

The challenge in interfaith dialogue lies in balancing fidelity to the Catholic faith with an openness to learning from others. This balance requires a deep understanding of one's own faith, as well as a genuine respect for the beliefs of others.

1. Remaining true to the Catholic Faith: The Church's commitment to evangelization must never compromise the integrity of the Catholic faith. Catholics are called to witness to the truth of the Gospel with conviction, always



grounded in the teachings of the Church. This includes a deep understanding of Catholic doctrine, the sacraments, and the life of Christ. However, this does not mean that Catholics should be closed off to learning from others. Instead, it is about confidently sharing the richness of the Catholic faith while being open to dialogue.

2. Openness to learning from others: Openness in dialogue involves a willingness to listen and learn from the religious experiences and insights of others. This does not mean adopting the beliefs of another faith but recognizing the wisdom and truths that can be found in different religious traditions. Pope Francis often speaks of the importance of listening: "Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur." In interfaith dialogue, listening is essential - it shows respect and acknowledges the dignity of the other person's faith.

3. The Spirit of humility: Effective dialogue is rooted in humility. Recognizing that no one has a monopoly on truth allows for a more genuine exchange of ideas and beliefs. The Catholic Church teaches that the fullness of truth resides in Christ and His Church, but it also acknowledges that "seeds of the Word" can be found in other religious traditions. This understanding encourages Catholics to approach dialogue with humility, recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others.

Practical approaches to interfaith dialogue

1. Creating safe spaces for dialogue: One of the first steps in fostering interfaith dialogue is creating safe and welcoming environments where people of different faiths can come together. Parishes and dioceses can organize interfaith events, discussion groups, or cultural exchanges that allow for respectful and meaningful conversations.

2. Education and formation: Educating Catholics about other religions is essential for meaningful dialogue. By understanding the beliefs, practices, and values of other faith traditions, Catholics can engage in more informed and respectful conversations. This



education should also include a deepening of their own faith, ensuring that Catholics are well-grounded in the teachings of the Church.

3. Common social action: Collaborating on social justice initiatives can be a powerful way to build relationships and foster dialogue. When people of different faiths work together to address common concerns - such as poverty, environmental stewardship, or human rights - they not only make a positive impact on society but also build trust and understanding. This shared action can open the door to deeper conversations about faith and values.

4. Prayer and worship: While interfaith dialogue often focuses on intellectual and social exchanges, spiritual dialogue through shared prayer and worship can also be deeply meaningful.

Conclusion

The pastoral mission of the Church in today's pluralistic world involves not only proclaiming the Gospel but also

engaging in respectful and open dialogue with people of other faiths. This dialogue, rooted in humility, respect, and a commitment to mutual understanding, can be a powerful form of evangelization. By exploring common spiritual ground, such as the inter-textual reading of Sacred Scriptures, and balancing fidelity to the Catholic faith with openness to learning from others, the Church can build bridges and foster peace in a divided world. As we embrace this mission, let us remember the words of Pope Francis: "Dialogue is born when I am capable of recognizing others as a gift of God and accept they have something to tell me." Through dialogue, the Church can continue to witness to the love of Christ, drawing all people closer to the truth and unity found in Him.

** The author, a priest of the Diocese of Dindigul, currently serves as its Financial Administrator. He has been involved in pastoral ministry and interfaith dialogue at the diocesan level. ♦*



Missionary spirit in the face of challenges

*By Sr Anjala Lincy Clark**

Mission Sunday is a day to reflect on the heart of the Church's mission: to bring the Good News of Christ to all the corners of the world. This mission, rooted in Christ's Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), has inspired countless missionaries throughout history to step beyond their comfort zones, face immense challenges, and witness to the transformative power of the Gospel. The Catholic mission is deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and is inspired by His command to His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Catholic missionaries aim to share the message of God's love, salvation through Jesus Christ, and the teachings of the Gospel. Here are examples that connect the Catholic mission with saints and Jesus:

Biblical foundations of the mission

The missionary call finds its roots deeply embedded in the Bible. From the call of Abraham to leave his homeland (Genesis 12:1-3) to the apostles' mandate to spread the Gospel, Scripture is replete with examples of individuals who, driven by faith, embarked on missions to fulfil God's will.

One profound example is the prophet Jonah, who, despite initial reluctance, was sent by God to Nineveh to preach repentance (Jonah 1:1-2). Jonah's story illustrates that the mission is not without its difficulties—be it personal hesitation, fear of the unknown, or the challenge of confronting a sinful society. Yet, God's grace empowers those He calls to overcome these obstacles.

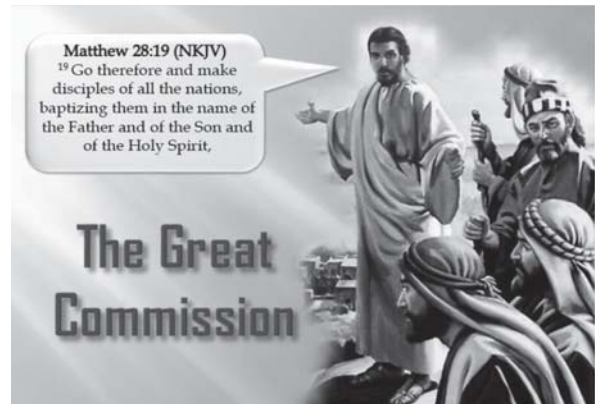
In the New Testament, St. Paul's missionary journeys stand as a testament to the relentless pursuit of the mission despite trials. Paul faced persecution, imprisonment, and even shipwreck (2 Corinthians 11:24-28), yet his unwavering faith in Christ enabled him to spread the Gospel far and wide. His life reminds us that the mission often involves suffering, but it is through these trials that the message of Christ shines brightest.

The saints: witnesses of missionary zeal

Jesus Christ (c. 4 BC – c. 30 AD) is the central figure in Christianity, and His life, teachings, death, and resurrection form the foundation of the Catholic faith. His ministry was, in essence, a mission to reconcile humanity with God and to bring salvation. He commissioned His disciples to continue this mission after His ascension.

1. St Peter (c. 1 AD – c. 64 AD):

Considered the first pope, St. Peter was a prominent disciple of Jesus. After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he became a key figure in the early Christian community. According to



tradition, he travelled to spread the Gospel, and his missionary efforts are seen as foundational to the establishment of the Christian Church.

2. St Paul (c. 5 AD – c. 67 AD):

Originally a persecutor of Christians, St Paul underwent a profound conversion and became a fervent missionary for Christ. He undertook several missionary journeys, spreading the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. His letters, found in the New Testament, are crucial for understanding early Christian theology and missionary work.

3. St Patrick (c. 385-461):

Known as the patron saint of Ireland, St Patrick was a missionary and bishop who played

a crucial role in the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. His life reflects the mission of spreading the Gospel and establishing Christian communities. St Mother Teresa (1910-1997):

Mother Teresa's missionary work was an embodiment of Jesus' call to serve the least of these. Inspired by her deep love for Christ, she dedicated her life to caring for the sick and the poor. Her mission, the Missionaries of Charity, continues to provide humanitarian aid and spread the Christian message.

4. St Francis of Assisi (1181-1226):

St Francis is famous for his radical commitment to poverty, simplicity, and care for creation. His mission was rooted in imitating the life of Jesus and spreading the Gospel through a life of humility and service to the poor. The Franciscan order he founded continues to be active in missionary work.

5. St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556):

The founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), St Ignatius dedicated his life to serving Christ. The Jesuits became known for their missionary work and education. St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, a guide to deepening one's relationship with God, has been influential in the Catholic Church.

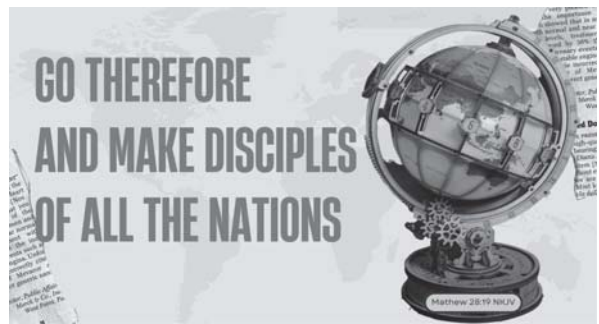
6. St Damien de Veuster (1840-1889):

St Damien de Veuster was a Belgian priest who dedicated his life to serving those with leprosy in Hawaii. His mission was marked by his willingness to live among and care for the afflicted, embodying Jesus' compassion for the marginalized.



7. St Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897):

Known as "The Little Flower," St Thérèse lived a life of simplicity and humility as a Carmelite nun. Her "Little Way" emphasized



doing small acts with great love. Despite living a cloistered life, she saw her mission as helping souls through prayer and sacrifice.

8. St Katharine Drexel (1858-1955):

An American heiress who became a religious sister, St Katharine Drexel used her inheritance to establish schools and missions for Native Americans and African Americans. Her mission was rooted in addressing social injustices and providing education to those in need.

9. St Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941):

A Polish Franciscan friar, St Maximilian Kolbe, is known for sacrificing his life to save a fellow prisoner in Auschwitz. His mission was to promote the Immaculate Heart of Mary and spread the Gospel through various media outlets, including a magazine he founded called "Knight of the Immaculate."

Modern missionaries: challenges and triumphs

Today, missionaries continue to face numerous challenges, from political instability and cultural resistance to the ever-present danger of persecution. However, like the saints before them, modern missionaries are sustained by their faith and the support of the global Church. For instance, missionaries in conflict zones often face the threat of violence and martyrdom. Yet, they remain steadfast in their mission, inspired by the words of Christ: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). Their courage is a witness to the world of the power of faith over fear. Moreover, in increasingly secular societies, missionaries encounter the challenge of indifference or outright hostility to the Gospel message. Yet, through creative evangelization efforts, such as digital platforms and community-based initiatives, they find ways to

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Connecting technology with the Gospel

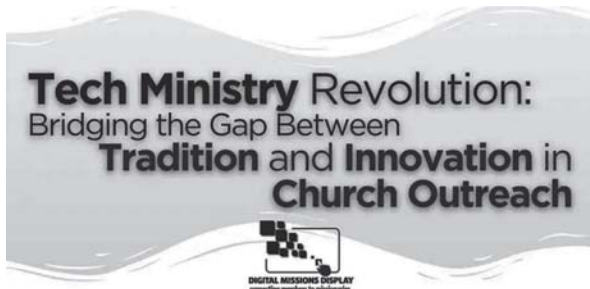
By Nigel Fernandes*

Introduction

The advent of modern technology and the rise of social media platforms have transformed the way we communicate, interact, and share information. In this digital age, the Church faces both an unprecedented opportunity and a unique challenge: to effectively evangelize and spread the Gospel message using these powerful tools. As society becomes increasingly interconnected through digital means, the Church's mission to evangelize must adapt to this new landscape, finding innovative ways to reach and engage with people around the world. As we celebrate the World Mission Day 2024, reflecting on 'go and invite everyone to the banquet,' it is important to note that it is the table of digital media that plays a vital role in uniting everyone today.

The digital revolution and the Church

The digital revolution has brought about a significant shift in how people consume content and interact with one another. Social media platforms, websites, blogs, podcasts, and video channels have become integral parts of daily life, particularly among younger generations. The Church, recognizing the potential of these platforms, has embraced digital media as a means of fulfilling its mission to evangelize.



Pope Francis has often spoken about the importance of the digital world in the Church's

mission. In his message for the 48th World Communications Day, he stated, "The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network not of wires but of people." This perspective encourages the Church to see technology not merely as a tool, but as a space where authentic relationships and faith can flourish.

Catholic Connect of CCBI

In India, one of the unique examples of effective evangelization through digital means is the recently launched Catholic Connect App, an initiative of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI). Launched on 31 January 2024 with the aim of bringing the Church closer to the faithful. Catholic Connect has begun to share the Gospel, promote Church events, and engage with Catholics across the country.

Catholic Connect has successfully created a vibrant online community where members can participate in prayer groups, access daily reflections, and receive spiritual guidance. The platform has been particularly effective in reaching young people, who are more likely to engage with content online. Catholic Connect makes Church's message more accessible and relevant to a digital audience.

Practical tips for engaging a digital audience

1. Know your audience: To effectively evangelize online, it's crucial to understand the demographics you are trying to reach. Are you targeting youth, young adults, or families? Understanding your audience will help tailor your content to meet their spiritual needs and interests. For instance, younger audiences might respond better to shorter, visually engaging content, while older audiences might prefer in-depth articles or live-streamed events.



2. Create engaging content: Content is king in the digital world. Whether it's a social media post, a blog article, or a video, the content you create should be engaging, relevant, and visually appealing. Use a mix of media - text, images, videos, and infographics - to capture attention and convey your message effectively. For example, short, inspiring video clips or well-designed quote images can quickly convey a powerful message and are highly shareable.

3. Be consistent: Consistency is key to building an online presence. Regularly posting content, whether it's daily reflections, weekly articles, or monthly newsletters, helps keep your audience engaged and connected. Consistency also builds trust, as your audience will come to expect and look forward to your content. Tools like social media schedulers can help you plan and maintain a consistent posting schedule.

4. Foster interaction and community: Social media is not just about broadcasting a message; it's about building relationships and fostering community. Engage with your audience by responding to comments, asking questions, and encouraging discussions. Online prayer groups, live Q&A sessions, and interactive webinars are great ways to foster a sense of community and encourage active participation.

5. Utilize analytics and feedback: Digital platforms offer valuable insights into how your content is performing. Use analytics to track engagement, identify which content resonates most with your audience, and adjust your strategy accordingly. Additionally, seek feedback from your audience to understand

their needs and preferences. This can help refine your approach and make your evangelization efforts more effective.

6. Be authentic and relatable: People are more likely to engage with content that feels genuine and relatable. Share personal stories, testimonies, and real-life examples that illustrate the faith in action. Authenticity builds trust and makes the message of the Gospel more compelling. Pope Francis himself is known for his relatable and down-to-earth communication style, which resonates with people across the globe.

7. Collaborate and network: Collaborating with other online ministries, parishes, or Catholic influencers can amplify your reach and impact. Networking with other content creators allows for the sharing of resources, ideas, and audiences, thus creating a broader platform for evangelization. Joint campaigns, guest posts, or cross-promotions can help introduce your content to new audiences and build a stronger online Catholic community.

Summing up

The digital age presents a unique opportunity for the Church to fulfil its mission of evangelization. By effectively using modern technology and social media platforms, the Church can reach a broader audience, engage with people in new ways, and share the timeless message of the Gospel in a manner that resonates with today's digital culture. The success story of Catholic Connect of CCBI and other online ministries demonstrates that, when used wisely, digital tools can



become powerful instruments for spreading the faith. As we continue to navigate the digital landscape, it is essential to remain innovative, authentic, and committed to the mission of sharing the Good News with all people. In doing so, the Church can continue to fulfil its role as a sign of hope, love, and truth in the modern world.

**The author is the CEO of ATC Publishers, Arclight Global. ♦*

The inclusivity of God's love

Lessons from Jesus' interactions with children in the synoptic gospels

By Fr Dr Yesu Karunanidhi*

Introduction

The theme of the World Mission Day 2024, “Go and invite everyone”, resonates deeply with the Christian mission to evangelize, reach out, and embrace all people with the love and message of Jesus Christ. This theme is powerfully illustrated in the Synoptic gospels - Matthew, Mark, and Luke - where Jesus' interactions with children provide a profound insight into the Kingdom of God. In a society where children were often seen as insignificant, Jesus' welcoming attitude toward them was both counter-cultural and revolutionary. This article reflects on these encounters, offering an interpretation of the texts and their significance, particularly within the context of India today.

Jesus and the children: A counter-cultural invitation

In the synoptic gospels, the accounts of Jesus blessing the children (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17) serve as a critical teaching moment for his disciples and followers. The context reveals a societal attitude that undervalued children, viewing them as lesser beings who should not disturb the important work of religious leaders. However, Jesus' response to his disciples, when they attempted to turn the children away, is striking: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14, NIV).

Jesus' welcoming of the children is more than just an act of kindness; it is a radical statement about the nature of the Kingdom of God. He elevates the status of children, not by

emphasizing their innocence or purity, as often misunderstood, but by highlighting their lowly status. In doing so, Jesus turns societal expectations upside down, teaching that the Kingdom of God is for those who, like children, are humble, dependent, and open to receiving God's grace without pretence.

Interpretation of the texts: The heart of the Kingdom

The synoptic gospels consistently portray Jesus as someone who embraces the marginalized and the overlooked. By placing children at the centre of his teachings on the Kingdom, Jesus emphasizes the inclusivity of God's love. The Kingdom is not reserved for the powerful, the learned, or the religious elite but is open to all, especially those who are often disregarded by society.

In Mark 10:15, Jesus states, “Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” This statement is not about adopting childlike characteristics but about recognizing our own neediness and dependence on God. The children Jesus embraced were powerless and vulnerable, embodying the very attitude required to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, the call to “invite everyone” extends beyond a mere invitation to participate in religious activities; it is an invitation to embrace a radical reorientation of values, where humility, openness, and dependence on God are paramount.

Contextual applications for today in India

In the diverse and pluralistic context of India, the theme of “Go and invite everyone” carries significant implications. India, with its vast social, economic, and religious diversity, presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Christian mission. The story of Jesus and the children offers a



powerful message for the Church in India, calling it to reflect the inclusive and welcoming nature of the Kingdom of God.

1. Embracing the marginalized:

Just as Jesus embraced children, the Church in India is called to reach out to the marginalized, including those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. In a country where caste discrimination, poverty, and social exclusion are still prevalent, the Christian community must be a light of hope, offering love, acceptance, and dignity to all, especially those who are often overlooked.

2. Inclusivity in evangelization:

The message of the Kingdom is for everyone, regardless of their background, religion, or social status. The Church must ensure that its evangelization efforts are inclusive, breaking down barriers that prevent people from different walks of life from encountering the love of Christ. This includes being sensitive to cultural contexts and respecting the diverse traditions and beliefs of the people.

3. Valuing the young:

In a society where children and youth often face immense pressure and challenges, the Church must be a place where they are valued and nurtured. By creating spaces where young people can grow in faith and experience the



unconditional love of God, the Church can play a crucial role in shaping the future of India.

4. A humble witness:

The story of Jesus and the children reminds the Church of the importance of humility in its witness. The

Church must approach its mission not with an attitude of superiority but with a spirit of service and humility, recognizing its own dependence on God's grace and its call to serve others selflessly.

Conclusion

The interactions of Jesus with children in the synoptic gospels offer a lesson on the nature of the Kingdom of God and the call to "Go and invite everyone." As the Church in India continues its mission, it is challenged to embody the inclusive, humble, and welcoming spirit of Christ. By doing so, it can truly reflect the Kingdom of God on earth, where all are invited to experience the boundless love and grace of our Heavenly Father. May the World Mission Day that we will celebrate shortly inspire us to adopt the attitude of Jesus – of inclusion, diversity, and welcoming.

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Continued from Page 21: Missionary spirit in the face of challenges

connect with people where they are, just as St Paul adapted his approach to reach different audiences.

Conclusion: the mission continues

Mission Sunday reminds us that the call to mission is ongoing. Every baptized Christian is called to be a missionary, whether in distant lands or within their own communities. The examples of biblical figures, saints, and modern missionaries challenge us to embrace this call, to face the difficulties head-on, and to trust that God's grace will sustain us. As we reflect on the sacrifices and triumphs of those who have gone

before us, let us recommit ourselves to the mission, confident that, like them, we too can overcome any obstacle through faith in Christ, who promised, "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). These saints, besides many others, lived lives that were deeply aligned with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Their missions were diverse, reflecting the various ways one can serve God and others, whether through education, care for the sick, social justice, or prayerful contemplation. The Catholic Church honors and venerates these saints as examples of holiness and devotion to the mission of Christ. ♦

Paris 2024: Athletes witness to their faith

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games have been the scene not only of sporting prowess but also of displays of faith and devotion by athletes from around the world.

Despite Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits any type of religious expression, some athletes have not hidden their faith and have proudly displayed it at key moments of the competition.

Brazil's top athlete thanks God for the opportunity

Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade won the gold medal in the women's floor final, earning her second Olympic gold and her sixth medal in total, establishing herself as the best medalist among athletes from her country. In the competition, she beat out Simone Biles, the American Olympic gymnast who has won the most medals.



In an interview with CaaéTV, Andrade commented: "This medal was not because I asked God for a medal; he gave me the opportunity to win it. I went through everything I had to go through: I worked, I sweated, I cried, I tried hard, I laughed, I had fun, I travelled. So I feel that I made this possible too and he was always there blessing me, protecting me and feeling proud of me, knowing that his servant was always giving her best."

Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic, winner of the gold medal in the men's singles competition after beating Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, not only stood out for his skill on the court but also for his Orthodox Christian faith.



Throughout the tournament, Djokovic wore a cross around his neck and, after winning the final, he told the media that God is the key to

his success. "I thank God for giving me his mercy, for giving me this blessing and this opportunity," he said.

Historic medals for Guatemala

In trap shooting, Guatemalans Adriana Ruano and Jean Pierre Brol made history by winning medals for their country.



Ruano, who won the first gold medal for Guatemala, expressed her gratitude to God in the mixed zone, stating: "He has been key in this process; he has given me the strength and confidence to be able to do this work." After her victory, Ruano traveled to the Vatican, where Pope Francis blessed her medal.

Jean Pierre Brol, who won bronze, also gave thanks to God, sharing before starting a competition: "I ask him to give me the composure, the wisdom to be able to handle the situation, and he gave it to me, and here it is, here is the result. So, thanks to him for this."

'Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life'

Rayssa Leal, the 16-year-old Brazilian skateboarder, not only won the bronze medal, but she also used her moment on the podium to make a declaration of faith. When receiving her medal, she expressed in sign language that "Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

This same gesture was replicated by her compatriot Caio Bonfim when he received the silver medal for race walking, pointing to the sky and showing his devotion to Jesus.

A friendship born of faith

On July 28, Brazilian judoka Larissa Pimenta secured bronze in the 52-kilogram category, beating her Italian friend Odette Giuffrida.

Pimenta shared in an interview that Giuffrida came to know God through her and that, after the defeat, the Italian reminded her friend: "All honor and glory must be given to

him.” Both shared messages of gratitude to God on their Instagram accounts.

Photo of the year

Surfer Gabriel Medina, bronze medalist at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Tahiti, starred in one of the most iconic images of the event.

Raising his index finger in a sign of victory while in the air, Medina shared the photograph on his Instagram with the biblical quote “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13).

Other displays of faith

South African swimmer Tatjana Schoenmaker won the gold medal in the 100-meter breaststroke. To express her gratitude,



Schoenmaker wore a special T-shirt with the names of the people who supported her, headed by God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Ethiopian Tsige Duguma, who won the silver medal in the 800-meter race, showed that on the back of her race bib “Jesus is Lord” was written. Similarly, Lucia Yépez of Ecuador, a wrestler in the 53-kilogram category, took the silver medal in freestyle wrestling with the word

“God” on her right hand. In an interview, Yépez said: “He is on my path to victory. I always have faith.”

Britain's Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix, who won the bronze medal in the 3-meter synchronized springboard diving, told the BBC that despite the difficulties she went through, “it was just God's way of telling us that we still have a lot to do, and I give all the glory to God.”

In swimming, American Katie Ledecky became the swimmer with the most gold medals in Olympic history, taking her total to nine after her victory in the 800-meter freestyle.

Ledecky, who in an interview with the National Catholic Register in 2016 revealed that she prays a Hail Mary before every race, said: “More than anything, praying just helps me to concentrate and let go of things that don't matter in that moment. It gives me peace knowing I'm in good hands.”

The swimmer also praised devotion to Mary, noting that “she has a sacred role in Catholicism, and her strong faith and humility are things we can learn from.”

This story was first published by ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.

Source: www.catholicnewsagency.com ♦

Pope ends Asia trip with message of interfaith harmony

Pope Francis wrapped up his visit to Singapore on Friday, Sept 13, by praising its tradition of interfaith harmony. He closed out his four-nation trip through Asia with the same message of tolerance that he delivered at the start. His 11-day journey took him to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and East Timor before Singapore.

The Pope presided over a gathering of young people from some of the religious traditions that are present in Singapore, where mosques, Buddhist temples and Christian churches stand side-by-side among the city-state's iconic skyscrapers.

In a sign he was enjoying himself, the pope ditched his speech and urged the youths to take risks, even if it means making mistakes. But he came back to the topic at hand to make his main point about the need for people of different faiths to engage in constructive dialogue rather than insist on the righteousness of their particular beliefs.

“All religions are a path to arrive at God,” he said. “They are like different languages to arrive there. But God is God for all.”

* <https://www.msn.com/>

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Joseph of Cupertino

1603 - 1663

Feast Day - September 18

His father, a poor carpenter, died before his birth and his mother, who was unable to pay the debts, lost her home and gave birth to Joseph in a stable at Cupertino, Italy, on June 17, 1603.

If ever a tiny child began life with nothing in his favour it was Joseph of Cupertino; he had only one hopeful and saving quality — that he knew it. Other boys of his own age were clever; he was easily the dullest of them all. Others were winning and attractive, nobody ever wanted him. He went to school with the rest of the children in the village, but he did not succeed in anything. He was absent-minded, awkward, nervous, etc.; a sudden noise, such as the ringing of a church-bell, would make him drop his schoolbooks on the floor. Altogether, even for those who pitied him, and wished to be kind to him, Joseph was something of a trial.

Joseph began having mystical visions when he was seven, and was often so lost to the world around him that the other children made fun of him giving him the nickname, "open-mouthed" for his gaping manner.

He had an irascible temper and read very poorly, giving others the impression that he was dumb and good for nothing. Aside from that, he was so continually drawn into ecstasy that it was impossible for him to be attentive to the tasks at hand. Thus, when he secured a job, he lost it very quickly.

It is said that his mother often considered him a nuisance and treated him harshly. Joseph was purported to be slow to learn and absent-minded. He was said to frequently wander

aimlessly, with his mouth gaping open. He tried to learn the trade of shoemaking, but failed. He asked to become a Franciscan, but they initially would not accept him. Finally he did join the Capuchins but for a short time. Eight months later, they sent him away. Sources say it was because he could not seem to do anything right.



At length, one day, in the midst of this aimless life, when Joseph was already seventeen years of age, there came into his village a begging friar. At once a new idea came into Joseph's mind. He could not be anything in the world, because he seemed incapable of learning anything; strangely enough this thought had never troubled him much. But surely he could at least be a friar, and go about begging his bread.

Brains were not needed for such a life as that; and as for the life itself, it appealed to him with a strange fascination, as having an ideal of its own. The Franciscan monastery accepted him as a servant but was given friar's habit to put on.

About this time, Joseph began to change. He grew in humility and gentleness, fruits of the Holy Spirit at work in a person. He became more careful and successful at his work. He also began to pray more, do more voluntary acts of penance. Finally, he was able to enter the Franciscan order and, eventually, study for the priesthood. Although he was a good and holy friar, he had a very hard time with studies. During his seminary exams, the examiner happened to ask him to explain the only thing he knew well, and so he was ordained a deacon, and later a priest.

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Proclaim. Sept - Oct 2024

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Hedwig of Silesia

1174 – 1243

Feast Day - October 16

Hedwig of Silesia, also Hedwig of Andechs, a member of the Bavarian comital House of Andechs, was Duchess of Silesia from 1201 and of Greater Poland from 1231 as well as High Duchess consort of Poland from 1232 until 1238. She was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1267 by Pope Clement IV.

Born in 1174 to the Count Berthold IV of Andechs and Agnes of Wettin, daughter of the Count of Rotlechts. St Hedwiges, by a distinguishing effect of the divine mercy in her favour, was from her cradle formed to virtue by the example and lessons of her devout mother and of those that were placed about her. In her infancy she discovered no marks of levity, and all her inclinations were turned to piety and devotion. She was placed very young in the Benedictine Abbey Kitzingen in Franconia, where her aunt Matilda was the abbess and only taken thence when twelve years old, to marry Henry, Duke of Silesia, descended of the Dukes of Glogau, in that country; to which match she only consented out of compliance with the will of her parents.

As soon as Henry succeeded his father in 1201, he had to struggle with his Piast relatives, at first with his uncle Duke Mieszko IV Tanglefoot who immediately seized the Upper Silesian Duchy of Opole. In 1206 Henry and his cousin Duke Władysław III Spindleshanks of Greater Poland agreed to swap the Silesian Lubusz Land against the Kalisz region, which met with fierce protest by Władysław's III nephew Władysław Odonic. When Henry went to Gąsawa in 1227 to meet his Piast cousins, he narrowly saved his life, while

High Duke Leszek I the White was killed by the men of the Pomerelian Duke Swietopelk II, instigated by Władysław Odonic.

The next year Henry's ally Władysław III Spindleshanks succeeded Leszek I as High Duke; however as he was still contested by his nephew in Greater Poland, he made Henry his governor at Kraków, whereby the Silesian duke once again became entangled in the dispute over the Seniorate Province. In 1229 he was captured and arrested at Płock Castle by rivaling Duke

Konrad I of Masovia. Hedwig proceeded to Płock pleading for Henry and was able to have him released.

Her actions promoted the reign of her husband: upon the death of the Polish High Duke Władysław III Spindleshanks in 1231, Henry also became Duke of Greater Poland and the next year prevailed as High Duke at Kraków. He thereby was the first of the Silesian Piast descendants of Władysław II the Exile to gain the rule over Silesia and the Seniorate Province in accord with the 1138 Testament of Bolesław III Krzywousty.

Upon his death in 1238, Henry was buried at a Cistercian monastery of nuns, Trzebnica Abbey (Kloster Trebnitz), which he had established in 1202 at Hedwig's request. Hedwig accepted the death of her beloved husband with faith. She said: "Would you oppose the will of God? Our lives are His."

The widow moved into the monastery, which was led by her daughter Gertrude, assuming the religious habit of a lay sister, but she did not take vows. She invited numerous German religious people from the Holy Roman



Empire into the Silesian lands, as well as German settlers who founded numerous cities, towns and villages in the course of the Ostsiedlung, while cultivating barren parts of Silesia for agriculture.

Hedwig and Henry had several daughters, though only one surviving son, Henry II the Pious, who succeeded his father as Duke of Silesia and Polish High Duke. The widow, however, had to witness the killing of her son, vainly awaiting the support of Emperor Frederick II, during the Mongol invasion of Poland at the Battle of Legnica (Wahlstatt) in 1241. The hopes for a reunited Poland were lost, and even Silesia



fragmented into numerous Piast duchies under Henry II's sons. Hedwig and her daughter-in-law, Henry II's widow Anna of Bohemia, established a Benedictine abbey at the site of the battle in Legnickie Pole, settled with monks coming from Opatovice in Bohemia.

In March 2020 the discovery of Hedwig's remains, that had been missing for centuries, was reported. The remains were found in her sanctuary in Trzebnica, in a silver casket bearing a lead tablet with an

inscription confirming Hedwig's identity.

Source: www.catholic.org/saints;
www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints ♦

Continued from Page 28: St Joseph of Cupertino

After this, the Holy Spirit began to work many amazing miracles through Joseph. Over seventy times, people say they saw him rise from the ground while offering mass or praying. Often he went into ecstasy and would be caught up in talking with God. He fell so deeply in love with God that everything he saw only drew him into a deeper union. He said that all the troubles of this world were nothing but the "play" battles children have with popguns. Joseph became so famous for the miracles that he was finally kept hidden from the public, but he was happy for the chance to be alone with his beloved Lord.

The life of this saint was marked by ecstasies and levitations. The mere mention of God or a spiritual matter was enough to take him out of his senses; at Mass he is said to have frequently floated in the air in rapture. Once as Christmas carols were being sung, he soared to the high altar and knelt in the air, in ecstatic prayer. The people flocked to him in droves seeking help and advice in the confessional, and he assisted many in living a truly devout Christian life.

A great fever seized him on August 10, 1663, and this filled him with a great joy, as he

knew the day was approaching when he would be completely united with God. He commented, as he had on other occasions, that he did not "serve God for the sake of Paradise, or out of fear of hell." He died on September 18, 1663. Pope Clement XIII canonized him in 1767. He is the patron saint of air travellers, pilots and learning disabled.



Source: www.catholic.org/saints;
www.ewtn.com; www.kwl.com.au/blog ♦

It was a life-giving ride

By Sarah Chasse*

Bill Sumiel was having a tough Friday. It was October 2020, and the 71-year-old, who was dealing with kidney failure and had been on dialysis for a few years, found himself at a vascular center 30 miles from home for the second time in 24 hours. The day before, his brother had driven him to the Vascular Institute in Vineland, New Jersey, for a routine declotting of his dialysis access port, but it unexpectedly clogged again that night.

Sumiel was no stranger to the struggles of kidney disease. He'd been diagnosed with diabetes more than 20 years before, which led to his kidney problems. He was on the transplant list, but no matches had yet appeared. So he continued with his treatments, including the periodic port declotting that had inexplicably failed this time. Without a ride lined up for Friday's do-over, Sumiel took an Uber to and from his appointment.

Timothy Letts, 31, was driving north to visit a friend when his phone pinged with the request for Sumiel's ride home. The trip was out of Letts's way. Still, he took the fare, figuring if the passenger was coming from a medical facility, he likely needed a ride.

When Sumiel got into the car, Letts could see that the older man was lethargic but in good spirits. And as they set out on the 40-minute drive to Sumiel's home in Salem, the pair got to chatting.

"Bill really lit up the car with positive energy," says Letts, who shared with Sumiel that he was a proud Army veteran. Sumiel, who works in sales at a company that produces piping, mentioned that in the past he'd enjoyed volunteering at his church and in his community, even serving as president of the city



council. But he was doing less these days, he explained, because the dialysis treatments left him exhausted.

Then Sumiel revealed that he was searching for a kidney donor. Letts joked that he'd be a good

donor candidate, given that he didn't drink or smoke. Sumiel agreed, though he didn't think much of it as they kept driving. Letts, however, couldn't stop thinking about it.

Letts believes in helping others, so donating a kidney "was something that was always on my mind," he says. Plus, he already liked and respected Sumiel. So, about a quarter-mile away from Sumiel's house, Letts said, "I'd like to see if I could be a match to give you a kidney."

"I was shocked," Sumiel recalls, chuckling. He was shaking so hard, he could barely write his name when they exchanged contact information. Once inside his home, he excitedly told his wife, "The Uber driver just offered me his kidney!"



After the initial excitement, Sumiel started feeling a bit less optimistic. He was touched by Letts's offer, though he wondered if it had just been an emotional moment. Would he hear from him? And what was the likelihood they'd be a match?

But Letts was true to his word. He got in touch with Sumiel just a few hours later, and by the next week, Letts had contacted the kidney transplant program. After a months-long

screening process — including an interview, sharing medical records, meeting a living-donor advocate and testing — the results were in: Letts was an ideal donor, and he and Sumiel were a perfect match.

On Dec 7, 2021, 14 months after they ended up in the same car by chance, Sumiel and Letts had their surgeries. It was a success. Today Sumiel is doing well, working full-time remotely and enjoying time with his family —

and no more dialysis.

Letts has moved to Germany to work with the Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation department as a civilian. He and Sumiel keep in touch and look forward to the day they can reunite. Sumiel is especially excited. After all, he says, "Living donors are special people."

* www.rd.com/article/heroic-uber-driver-kidney ♦

Vijayawada Diocese joins in flood relief work

A Catholic diocese has joined rescue operations in a southern Indian state where floods caused by torrential rain has claimed at least 33 lives.

The Andhra Pradesh government on Sept 3 said nearly 6.44 million people were affected by the heavy rain between Aug 28 and 31. Some 42,707 people are staying in 193 relief camps in Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, Guntur, Krishna, Eluru, Palnadu, Bapatla, and Prakasam districts in the coastal state. So far, 33 people have died, the government said.

Vijayawada diocese has 98 parishes and 13 of them have been affected. Our volunteers are part of the relief and rescue work, said Father Sunil Raju Thota, executive director of the diocese's Social Service Center (SSC). The team is helping affected people with sanitary kits, dry-ration kits, blankets, towels, study materials, emergency medicines, drinking water, milk, and food packets, he added. Over 2,000 families are in dire need of immediate relief material, according to an initial estimate by the diocese which has strong women's groups who have been rendering services as volunteers for the past 10 years.

The priest said priority is being given to families with infants, senior citizens, physically challenged people, lactating mothers, pregnant women, and family members with medical conditions.

Monisha Majumdar, an official with the disaster management department of Caritas India, said its partners are undertaking "relief and rescue work" along with the government. Majumdar added that the focus is on improving water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions.

* ucanews.com

Pope's Prayer Intentions – 2024

September : *For the cry of the Earth*

We pray that each one of us will hear and take to heart the cry of the Earth and of victims of natural disasters and climactic change, and that all will undertake to personally care for the world in which we live.

October: *For a shared mission*

We pray that the Church continue to sustain in all ways a Synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, the communion and the mission shared among priests, religious and lay people.

POPE FRANCIS' MISSION PRAYER

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,

God, forever and ever.

Amen.



The mission for all
requires the
commitment of all
- Pope Francis

Celebrate!
Participate!
Promote!
Give!



HOW?

- ✓ Participate in the Holy Mass.
- ✓ Pray for missionaries.
- ✓ Educate and raise awareness.
- ✓ Support financially.
- ✓ Engage in local mission activities.
- ✓ Reflect on your call to mission.
- ✓ Join our Mission Societies.

Rev. Dr. Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director

One Mission. Four Faces.

- PONTIFICAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH (POPF)
- PONTIFICAL SOCIETY OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE (POSPA)
- PONTIFICAL SOCIETY OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (MCA)
- PONTIFICAL MISSIONARY UNION OF THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND THE CONSECRATED LAITY (PMU)



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