

Mission Sunday - 2020

Is 60:1-6; Rom 10:9-18; Mt 28:16-20

Over one billion Catholics all over the world observe today as *World Mission Sunday*. This annual observance was instituted 94 years ago in 1926 by Pope Pius XI. Every year since then, the universal Church has dedicated the month of October to reflection on and prayer for the missions. On World Mission Sunday, Catholics gather to celebrate the Eucharist, and to contribute to a collection for the work of evangelization around the world. This annual celebration gives us a chance to reflect on the importance of mission work for the life of the Church. It reminds us that we are one with the Church around the world and we are all committed to carrying on the mission of Christ, however different our situations may be.

Pope Francis writes in his 2019 World Mission Day message, *Baptized and Sent*. “This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission.” So, the Holy Father calls on all Catholics and the Church to revive missionary awareness and commitment.

“*I have no other plan.*” S.D. Gordon has a beautiful story about the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. When the grand welcome ceremony was over, the Archangel Gabriel approached Jesus to resolve his doubts. He said, “I know that only very few in Palestine are aware of the great work of human salvation You have accomplished through Your suffering, death and Resurrection. But the whole world should know and appreciate it and become Your disciples, acknowledging You as their Lord and Savior. What is Your plan of action?” Jesus answered, “I have told all My Apostles to tell other people about Me and preach My Message through their lives. That’s all.” “Suppose they don’t do that?” Gabriel asked. “What’s your Plan B?” Jesus replied, “I have no other plan; I am counting on them.” On this World Mission Sunday, the

Church reminds us that Jesus is counting on, each one of us to make Him known loved and accepted by others around us.

Jesus, the first missionary, made a permanent arrangement for inviting us throughout the ages to share God's love and salvation: "*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, and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.*" (Mt 28:19). So, the mission of the Church is the mission of every member of the Church, and is not reserved for the priests, the religious, and the active missionaries alone. Thus, every Christian is a missionary with a message to share, the message of God's love, liberation, and eternal salvation.

Prayer is the second means of missionary work. Jesus said: "*Without me you can do nothing*" (Jn 15: 5). In his message for World Mission Sunday, 2004, Pope St. John Paul II stressed the fact that the Holy Spirit would help us to become witnesses of Christ only in an atmosphere of prayer. Since witnessing to Christ through life is not easy, so we need to support Missionaries by our prayers always. "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few*", the Lord said; "**pray** therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Lk 10:2).

So, on this Mission Sunday, let us learn to appreciate our missionary obligation and support the Church's missionary activities by leading transparent Christian lives, by prayers, and by generous donations. Pope Benedict XVI concluded his 2006 Mission Sunday message thus: "May the Virgin Mary, who collaborated actively in the beginning of the Church's mission with her presence beneath the Cross and her prayers in the Upper Room, sustain their action and help believers in Christ to be ever more capable of true love, so that, they become sources of living water in a spiritually thirsting world."