

The Holy Father's message for Mission Sunday 2009

Reach out with love

Abridged version of the Papal Message for Mission Sunday 2009

Mission Sunday

On Mission Sunday, I encourage each of you to seek a deeper involvement in the missionary mandate of Christ, to 'make disciples of all peoples'. This effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today is a service to the Christian community and the whole of humanity: to illuminate all peoples with the light of the Gospel.

A primary duty

The mission of the Church is to 'infect' all peoples with hope. This is why Christ calls, sanctifies and sends his disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of God. To announce the Gospel must be for us, as it was for the apostle Paul, a primary and impelling duty. The Church desires to transform the world with the proclamation of the Gospel of love, and to bring the light of God into this world. We ask nothing except to put ourselves at the service of all humanity, especially the suffering and the excluded.

Mission is essential

Missionary impulse has always been the sign of the vitality of a Church. Each Church must be committed to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth. I wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelising all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. At stake is the eternal salvation of all people. I remind all Churches, both ancient and those recently founded, that they should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world called to spread Christ, the light of the nations, to the far corners of the earth – a force for justice and peace, for true freedom and respect for human dignity. This mission must be a pastoral priority.

Persecution

Many missionaries bear witness to and spread the Kingdom of God in difficult situations, ranging from social discrimination to prison, torture, and even death. In this, they walk the same path and suffer the same destiny as Christ did in his mission. Pray for them.

Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio)

I thank the Pontifical Mission Societies for their indispensable service in inspiring and promoting involvement in the missionary activity of the Church. Uniquely, they help to realise in a practical way the communion between Churches and the concern they should have for one another.

Prayer and finance

Pray that the Church will always have passion for the mission to spread the Kingdom of God. Pray for missionaries on the front line of evangelisation, often in difficult and hostile situations. I therefore ask everyone to offer, as a sign of communion, financial assistance to help the young Churches as they too proclaim the Gospel of charity especially in difficult economic times.

Mary

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, who brought Christ into the world to be the light of the nations, guide us in our missionary activity.

Pope Benedict XVI

29 June 2009

The full text is available from Missio at the address below and at:

www.missio.org.uk

APF, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU Tel: 020 7821 9755



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The Holy Father's Mission Intentions for 2010

Please include these in your Parish Newsletter and in the Sunday Bidding Prayers at least once a month

Join with the Holy Father in praying that:

- January Christians may be aware that unity among all Christians is a condition for a more effective proclamation of the Gospel
- February the Church, missionary by its very nature, may strive to follow Christ faithfully and proclaim his Gospel to all peoples
- March the Church in Africa may be a sign and instrument of reconciliation and justice in every part of that continent
- April Christians persecuted for the sake of the Gospel may, with the help of the Holy Spirit, witness faithfully to God's love for the entire human race
- May all those involved in apostolic work may enliven the communities entrusted to their care with missionary enthusiasm
- June the Church in Asia may know how to communicate the Gospel and give joyful witness to Christ to those of other faiths
- July Christians may offer everywhere, especially in great urban centres, an effective promotion of education, justice, solidarity and peace
- August the Church may offer an open door to those forced to leave their own countries, suffering from discrimination, hunger, or war
- September by opening our hearts to love we may put an end to the numerous wars and conflicts which continue to shed blood in our world
- October Mission Sunday may remind us that the task of proclaiming Christ is essential to the Church's service for the benefit of humanity
- November the Church of Latin America may continue in its missionary endeavour, as part of the universal mission of the People of God
- December all peoples on earth may open their doors to Christ and to his Gospel of peace, brotherhood and justice

