

Intercessions

Celebrant

Mission Sunday invites us to remember our calling as missionaries, whether at home or overseas. May the Holy Spirit dwell in them, and in us, as we pray for our sisters and brothers here and throughout the world.

Intercessions

We pray for the Church. Father, may your Church grow in holiness; may she be for all a powerful sign of your presence.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for those who do not believe; sincerely following all that is right may they learn to find you, and through our example come to know you.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for all those who do not believe in Christ, that the Holy Spirit will lead them to know the riches of your love.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for those who lack the necessities of life; may our service of you become help for them.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for missionaries everywhere, give them the gift of perseverance and make them truly your light to the people they serve.

Lord, hear us.

Celebrant

All powerful and loving God, we are inspired by those who preach your Gospel throughout the world. May they continue to do so in faith and simplicity so that your Kingdom may emerge in our world. We ask this through Christ the Lord.
Amen.

Introduction to Lord's Prayer

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in every race and nation on earth.

Final Blessing

May the Lord bless you with enthusiasm and hope. *Amen*

May the Lord fill you with zeal for his mission. *Amen*

May the Lord grant you the courage of your faith. *Amen*

May the Lord bless you as you go forth, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

World Mission Sunday 2007

Liturgy Preparation Notes

**World Mission Sunday – 21 October 2007
29th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C**

Introduction

On World Mission Sunday we remind ourselves that Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations, leading all people into knowledge of him. Being missionary is not just the special calling of a few, but the responsibility of all. We ask God to fill us with a renewed desire to make his name known throughout the world.

Penitential Rite

Lord Jesus, you came to gather all nations into the peace of God's kingdom.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus you have shown us the way to the Father. *Christ, have mercy.*

Lord Jesus you are the source of eternal life. *Lord, have mercy.*

Today's Readings

First Reading Exodus 17: 8-13

Although Moses has trusted God every step of the journey and has learned to do this well, there are times when special prayer and entreaty is necessary. Here Moses doesn't just trust God in a general sort of way but makes great effort to beg God for help and enlists the support of others to do this - a model for Christian prayer.

Second Reading 2 Timothy 3: 14-42

St Paul reminds Timothy (who will become Bishop of Ephesus), that his duty is to proclaim and insist on the truth. It's an unfashionable message today, but Timothy must call people to obedience. As Christians we must really desire the truth, and be prepared to be of one mind with the scriptures and the teaching of the Church.

Gospel Luke 18: 1-8

One sometimes meets Christians who don't see the point of petitionary prayer. They reason that God knows what we need better than we do ourselves and so it's pointless to ask him to do what he has decided already - or decided not to do. Perhaps that stems from a rather impersonal understanding of God, influenced more by new age thinking than the Scriptures. Jesus told us to call God 'Father' so that we relate to the creator of the universe as a loving person and not an impersonal force. Most of Jesus' teaching on prayer is about petition, about the need to ask God for what we need and to keep on asking.

Sermon notes

Walk around London or any major city and imagine Christ had never been born or that the Gospel had never reached these islands in any shape or form. Take away the Gospel, take away Christ and see what's left of our culture and our country. Obviously much of the art, architecture and music is the direct product of Christianity but so also are many of our attitudes about fairness, honesty and above all the care for the victim and the marginalised. We are not always good at it, and there are forces which would get us to ignore them but the Gospel is part of our culture. Indeed our culture in great measure comes from the Gospel – a huge force for good. We would be incomparably poorer without it.

Pope Benedict in the first days of his pontificate declared war on relativism – the idea that all ideas are equal, that it doesn't matter which religion you practise so long as you're sincere. As Catholics we believe it matters that our religion is true.

Some people think the alternatives for modern society are either religious narrow-mindedness and bigotry – or religious indifference. Jesus tolerates neither; he was happy to break the law when it was necessary for the good of people. The authorities thought he was a threat to true religion whereas he was the revealer of it.

Jesus was very aware that religion can make people nasty, (or perhaps that nasty people if they are religious can be particularly nasty). His answer was not 'forget religion' but 'come to me and I'll show you who God is and how to worship him'. And so he gave us the Mass – his life, death and resurrection – and told us how to live – the Sermon on the Mount.

Other religions may be a path to God but, as Christians, we believe that God's ultimate revelation came through Jesus who calls us to help others experience God's unconditional acceptance.

We can become so used to Christianity that we can forget what a powerful force it is!

- ♦ Missionaries in Borneo told how head hunters, once they became Catholics, were so glad that they didn't have to do this any more to stay together, that they didn't have to strengthen their own group by hating and despising other groups – which is what people tend naturally to do.
- ♦ In many places where people have been denied their basic rights they have found dignity through becoming Christian. Isn't it strange how people in this country glibly accuse Catholicism of ignorance and superstition whereas the Church is one of the biggest and most sought-after providers of education throughout the developing world?
- ♦ In East Africa many parishes are celebrating their centenary. Seminaries are full to overflowing and thousands of men and women in what we used to call 'the missions' are training to be missionaries. Already, there are several dioceses in England and Wales where priests and Sisters from mission countries are serving as missionaries.
- ♦ We have come here today in response to Lord's command – do this in memory of me. We celebrate Mass simply because Jesus told us to.
- ♦ And we continue to send missionaries also simply because JESUS TOLD US TO, 'Go make disciples of all the nations'.
- ♦ If we don't believe the Gospel is truly for everyone then we only believe it half-heartedly ourselves.
- ♦ All the baptised are missionaries. A missionary attitude is essential for a healthy faith.

The APF is at the forefront of supporting the work of all missionaries and the new Churches. By supporting the work of the APF you are sharing your own gift of faith.

Please pray unceasingly for the overseas mission of the Church. Consider becoming a missionary yourself.