



# The Missionary Dimension of The Priesthood

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# The Priest and Mission

“Priests are called by virtue of the sacrament of Orders to share in concern for the Church's mission: **The spiritual gift that priests have received in ordination prepares them, not for any narrow and limited mission, but for the most universal and all embracing mission of salvation 'to the end of the earth'** (PO 10). For every priestly ministry shares in the universal scope of the mission that Christ entrusted to his apostles (OT 20). For this reason, the formation of candidates to the priesthood must aim at giving them the true Catholic spirit, whereby they will learn to transcend the bounds of their own diocese, country or rite, and come to the aid of the whole Church, in readiness to preach the Gospel anywhere. **All priests must have the mind and the heart of missionaries** — open to the needs of the Church and the world, with concern for those farthest away, and especially for the non-Christian groups in their own area. They should have at heart, in their prayers and particularly at the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the concern of the whole Church for all of humanity.” (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 67)



## The Priest and Mission

“Especially in those areas where Christians are a minority, **priests must be filled with special missionary zeal and commitment.** The Lord entrusts to them not only the pastoral care of the Christian community, **but also and above all the evangelization of those of their fellow-citizens who do not belong to Christ's flock.** Priests will not fail to make themselves readily available to the Holy Spirit and the bishop, to be sent to preach the Gospel beyond the borders of their country. This will demand of them not only maturity in their vocation, but also an uncommon readiness to detach themselves from their own homeland, culture and family, and a special ability to adapt to other cultures, with understanding and respect for them.”  
(John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 67)



# Christ's Calling

- Jesus called his first priests “that they might be with him and send them forth to preach” (Mk 3:14).
- “As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18).
- “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17:18).
- “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21)
- “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:20).
- “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15)



## Priestly Identity and Mission

- Diaconal Ordination: “Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach.”
- PO 4: “Priests ... have the primary duty of proclaiming the Gospel to all. In this way they fulfill the command of the Lord (Mk 16:15) and they establish and build up the people of God.”
- The prophetic *munus*
- “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16)
- “I am a mission on this earth. This is the reason why I am here in this world” (EG 273)



## From Maintenance to Mission

- This phrase from a 2005 book of Paulist Father Robert Rivers has almost become trite. Everyone recognizes it; few implement it. Most conceptualize it narrowly, referring to shifting from parochial *ad intra* concerns to a focus on going out and sharing our faith with others. Normally, however, the focus is on not just bringing Christ to others but on thereby strengthening the parish.
- Pope Francis speaks of a “missionary impulse capable of transforming everything.” He poignantly asks, “What would happen if we took these words seriously?” (EG 27, 15).
- But what about going from maintenance to the full meaning of mission as given to us by Christ in Mt 28 and Mk 16?



# Terminology

- There is a diversity of activities in the Church's one mission (RM 33):
  - **Mission proper** — Ad gentes, to those where Christ is not known or the ecclesial structures are immature to incarnate the faith and proclaim it.
  - **New Evangelization or Re-Evangelization** — Re-proposing the faith to the non-practicing baptized who have lost a living sense of the faith.
  - **Pastoral care of the faithful** — The work to help those practicing to growth in faith, hope and love.



## Terminology

RM 34: The boundaries between pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization and specific missionary activity are not clearly definable, and it is unthinkable to create barriers between them or to put them into watertight compartments. **Nevertheless, there must be no lessening of the impetus to preach the Gospel** and to establish new churches among peoples or communities where they do not yet exist, **for this is the first task of the Church, which has been sent forth to all peoples and to the very ends of the earth. Without the mission ad gentes, the Church's very missionary dimension would be deprived of its essential meaning and of the very activity that exemplifies it.**

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## Inspirational Examples

- On Jan. 27, Pope Francis recognized the martyrdom of the Franciscan Martyrs of Georgia, soon-to-be Blessed Pedro de Corpa, Blas Rodriguez, Miguel de Añon, Antonio de Badajoz and Francisco de Veráscola, Franciscan Missionaries killed in hatred of the faith between Sept 14-17, 1597.
- The North American Martyrs
- Saint Junipero Serra
- Saints John Neumann and Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos
- Saint Francis Xavier
- Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini
- Saint Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face



# Mission Structure since the Reformation

- Propaganda Fide (1622), established by Pope Gregory XV
  - An eye to the Protestant Lands of Europe, Missions in Americas and Asia, and the Orthodox Churches.
  - Canonizations of 1622
  - Pontifical Urban College (1627)
  - US, Canada, England (1908)
- Pope Paul VI, Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (1967)
- Pope Benedict XVI and the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (2010)
- Pope Francis and the Dicastery for Evangelization (2022)
  - Section of First Evangelization (Cardinal Luis Tagle)
  - Section of New Evangelization (Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella)



## The Four Pontifical Mission Societies

- The **Society of Propagation of the Faith** (1822) by Blessed Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862)
- The **Missionary Childhood Association**, also known as Holy Childhood by Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844)
- The **Society of St. Peter the Apostle** (1889) by Jeanne and Stephanie Bigard
- The **Missionary Union** (1916) by Blessed Father Paolo Manna, PIME (1872-1952)
- In 1922, the first three societies received the title “Pontifical” and their central offices were moved to Rome. The Missionary Union was named Pontifical in 1956.



# The Society of the Propagation of the Faith

- Blessed Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862)
- Letters from Brother Phileas
- Dream of Oil Lamps
- Small groups of ten women in father's silk mill to pray for missions and contribute a *sou* — penny — a week.
- First contributions went to care for the Diocese of Louisiana (Florida keys to Canada) as well as Kentucky and China.
- Continues to support 1124 missionary dioceses across the globe.





# The Missionary Childhood Association

- In 1843, Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844) of Nancy and Toul, a founder of the Fathers of Mercy to help re-evangelize France, talked with Pauline Jaricot about his long-term hope to work with the world's poorest children in the missions.
- She suggested he appeal to the children of France to help children around the world.
- As a consequence of the meeting the Missionary Childhood Association, "children helping children," (especially children in China) was born.
- He went on appeals to New York, New Orleans, Dubuque, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Montreal, Quebec City and places in between.
- Each year MCA helps more the 2 million children in religious and catechetical programs and with other basic human and educational needs.





# The Society of St. Peter the Apostle

- In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jeanne Bigard (1859-1914) and her mother Stephanie, in Caen, France received a letter from Bishop Jules-Alphonse Cousin in Nagasaki, asking for financial help to keep his seminary open.
- They began gathering funds to support those seminarians and in 1899, they founded the Society of St. Peter the Apostle to support mission vocations, both priestly and religious.
- In its first year, it supported 2,700 seminarians. Today nearly 31,000 seminarians in Africa and Asia are supported with a \$700 annual stipend, as well as 10,000 religious novices.





# The Missionary Union

- In 1916, Blessed Paolo Manna, PIME (1872-1952), who had worked for a decade as a missionary in East Burma before having to return to Italy for health reasons, established the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.
- He had spent most of his life stimulating missionary zeal among the clergy and faithful. His idea was that if the clergy were zealous for the missions, all the faithful would be.
- At the request of the Vatican, he established a seminary for missionaries in Ducenta, Italy. In 1926, at the instigation of Pius XI, he established the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions (PIME). He was beatified in 2001 by St. John Paul II, who said, "In Father Paolo Manna we perceive a special reflection of the glory of God. He spent his entire life promoting the missions. In one of his letters to the missionaries, he stated: "In fact the missionary is nothing if he does not put on the person of Jesus Christ.... Only the missionary who copies Jesus Christ faithfully in himself can reproduce his image in the souls of others."





# The Four Societies in Brief

1822

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded by Blessed Pauline Jaricot in Lyon, France.

It oversees World Mission Month that builds the Universal Solidarity fund.

Provides subsidies to 940 dioceses, training to catechists, supports the building of new churches.



1843

The Missionary Childhood Association was founded by French Bishop Bishop Forbin-Janson.

MCA continues to follow the vision of Bishop Forbin-Janson – “children helping children.”

Today, MCA oversees over 2,710 programs for the formation and protection of children.



1889

The Society of St. Peter Apostle was founded in France by Jeanne Bigard, and her mother, Stephanie.

It supports mission vocations, both priestly and Religious.

Today, over 28,000 major seminarians, mostly in Asia and Africa, receive an average annual subsidy of \$700 per student.



1916

Father Paolo Manna, a PIME missionary, establishes the Missionary Union.

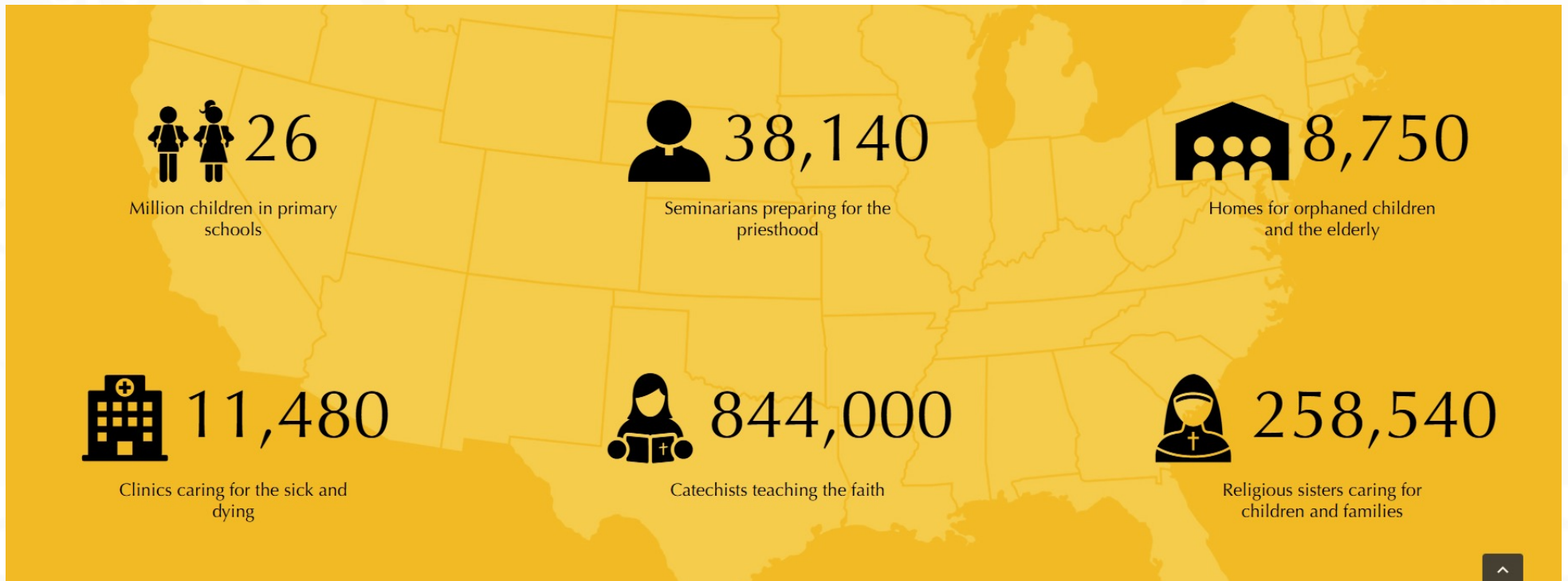
This spiritual apostolate supports those engaged in catechesis and religious education to help Catholics better understand their baptismal responsibility for the Church's missionary work.







# In 2024 The Pontifical Mission Societies Supported:



Million children in primary schools



Seminarians preparing for the priesthood



Homes for orphaned children and the elderly



Clinics caring for the sick and dying



Catechists teaching the faith



Religious sisters caring for children and families





# THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES' INVESTMENT IN THE WORLD 2024

<b>Algeria:</b> \$94,762	<b>El Salvador:</b> \$21,000	<b>Pakistan:</b> \$601,668
<b>Angola:</b> \$32,000	<b>Falkland Islands/Malvinas:</b> \$35,000	<b>Panama:</b> \$21,000
<b>Apostolic Prefecture in the Marshall Islands:</b> \$22,000	<b>Guatemala:</b> \$ 39,500	<b>Papua New Guinea:</b> \$632,571
<b>Archdiocese of Agana:</b> \$30,000	<b>Haiti:</b> \$76,510	<b>Paraguay:</b> \$22,000
<b>Argentina:</b> \$ 69,000	<b>Honduras:</b> \$52,500	<b>Peru:</b> \$45,000
<b>Bangladesh:</b> \$28,800	<b>India:</b> \$2,795,649	<b>Philippines:</b> \$43,164
<b>Bangladesh:</b> \$626,017	<b>Indonesia:</b> \$1,122,571	<b>Rwanda:</b> \$850,955
<b>Bolivia:</b> \$21,000	<b>Kazakhstan:</b> \$226,300	<b>Singapore:</b> \$31,000
<b>Brazil:</b> \$15,000	<b>Kenya:</b> \$499,270	<b>South Africa:</b> \$521,708
<b>Chile:</b> \$31,500	<b>Kuwait:</b> \$ 27,000	<b>Tanzania:</b> \$1,285,084
<b>Colombia:</b> \$5,750	<b>Lebanon:</b> \$5,000	<b>Thailand:</b> \$1,027,457
<b>Colombia:</b> \$43,950	<b>Liberia:</b> \$ 282,906	<b>Turkey:</b> \$18,000
<b>Costa Rica:</b> \$17,500	<b>Madagascar:</b> \$107,885	<b>Uganda:</b> \$889,372
<b>Diocese of Caroline:</b> \$30,000	<b>Mexico:</b> \$28,500	<b>Uruguay:</b> \$36,000
<b>Diocese of Fairbanks:</b> \$15,000	<b>Mozambique:</b> \$50,080	<b>Zambia:</b> \$43,409
<b>Ecuador:</b> \$24,500	<b>New Zealand:</b> \$170,817	
	<b>Nigeria:</b> \$1,358,219	



# The Pontifical Mission Societies

- There are 120 national offices worldwide.
- Each diocese is supposed to appoint a diocesan director
- Every local church is part of the TPMS network by participating in World Mission Month each October, encouraging missionary spirit in the hearts of the baptised through prayer, formation, and almsgiving.
- The funds raised by the National Directions throughout the world do not go to the Vatican but form a pool of money, which we call the Universal Solidarity Fund, which the national directors govern, choosing recipients every May. The funds are given to the beneficiaries through the Nuncios.



## The Pontifical Mission Societies in the USA

- Board of Bishops and lay people
- National Director and staff
- Offices in New York City and St. Petersburg, Florida
- Website: [PontificalMissions.org](http://PontificalMissions.org)
- Mission Magazine
- World Mission Month and World Mission Sunday
- #IGiveCatholic, [Missio.org](http://Missio.org) and other opportunities
- Help with the Missionary Co-ops in Dioceses



## Purposes of TPMS

- To educate and engage **Catholics in the United States** about the Church's global mission.
- To encourage **prayer, sacrifice, and financial support** for missionaries.
- To organize and promote **World Mission Month**, the peak of which is **World Mission Sunday**, the annual worldwide collection supporting the Pope's Missions celebrated on the second to last Sunday of October.
- To collaborate with **bishops, priests, religious, and lay leaders** to foster missionary discipleship.
- To provide resources for dioceses, parishes, and schools to **cultivate a missionary spirit**.

# World Mission Sunday 2025

## “Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples”

is the theme chosen by Pope  
Francis for October 2025.

## Sunday, October 19th



World Mission Sunday is the pinnacle moment of World Mission Month.

It is a day dedicated to publicly renewing the Church’s commitment to the missionary movement by taking up the only canonically (c. 216) mandatory second Sunday collection.

It has a direct impact in the Church in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific Islands, much like the first collections of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith helped build the Church in the United States.



# World Mission Sunday (Oct 19)

- The goal is for every parish in the country to become a community of prayer and support for the missionary activities of the Church.
- Offerings do not go to Vatican but directly to the beneficiaries to support:
  - Mission seminaries and religious formation houses
  - Subsidy to 1,124 Mission Dioceses
  - Education of children in mission schools
  - Building of chapels and churches
  - Homes for orphan children, the elderly and the sick
  - Special Grants
  - Role of nuncios



# Pope Francis in *Dilexit Nos* on the Missions



- In his encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, published on October 24, immediately after World Mission Sunday 2024, Pope Francis wrote extensively about the connection between devotion to the Sacred Heart and the missionary dimension of Christian life.
- “The enduring relevance of devotion to the heart of Christ is especially evident in the work of evangelization.”
- He cited the example of Saint Daniele Comboni, founder of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, whom the Holy Father said “discovered in the mystery of the heart of Jesus the source of strength for his missionary commitment” (160).





## Pope Francis in *Dilexit Nos* on the Missions



- Pope Francis added, “The flames of love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus expand through the Church’s missionary outreach, which proclaims the message of God’s love revealed in Christ.” He quoted Saint Vincent de Paul, who taught that “the heart of our Lord ... disposes us to go as he went.... He sends us, like [the apostles], to bring fire everywhere” (207).
- Mission, Pope Francis eloquently continued in one of the most beautiful passages of the encyclical, is “a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ” and “requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives” (209).



## Pope Francis in *Dilexit Nos* on the Missions



- “The greatest desire of every missionary of souls,” he added, is “to be able to speak of Christ, by witness or by word, in such a way that others seek to love him. For a heart that loves, this is not a duty but an irrepressible need” (210).
- We cannot help but make our own, he underlined, St. Paul’s words, “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16) as well as Jeremiah’s “Within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jer 20:9).



## Pope Francis in *Dilexit Nos* on the Missions



The Holy Father concluded by reminding us, missionaries across the globe, as well as every Catholic, “Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. ... Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realize that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission. He himself told us, ‘I am sending you out’ (*Lk 10:3*). It is part of our being friends with him. For this friendship to mature, however, it is up to you to let him send you forth on a mission in this world. ... Never forget that Jesus is at your side at every step of the way. ... He will always be there to encourage and accompany you. He has promised, ... ‘For I am with you always, to the end of the age’ (*Mt 28:20*) (215).



## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- National Director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the USA from 1950-1966.
- He raised hundreds of millions of dollars and donated \$10 million of his own earnings.
- He designed in 1951 and promoted the World Mission Rosary, praying for the missions on five continents.
- He founded Mission Magazine in July 1951.
- Left all his books and 40 percent of his effects (the most of any recipient) to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. It was his real passion in life and approaching death.



## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- During the Second Vatican Council, as National Director, he spoke on the Missions. We finish with his passion to live out the missionary dimension of our priesthood.
- “In place of the theological question ‘*What* are missions?’ I would suggest that we turn to the practical question: ‘*Where* are the missions?’ Are the missions exclusively in those territories where there are non-Christians? Or are the missions also in those regions, where there are few priests, few churches and great poverty? The simple answer to this question is: The missions are both.





## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- “I am a servant of the missions under the Propaganda. During three sessions of this council, many bishops who are living in great poverty, come to my seat in the council hall. They come from territories that are not under the Propaganda, but from areas where there are only seven to ten priests to care for 50,000 square miles. I ask: Is it Christian? Is it Catholic? Is it worthy of the charity of Christ to say to them: ‘You do not belong to mission territory?’
- “Is it not true that the doctrine of the collegiality of bishops imposes on us a missionary responsibility, not only for territories which were defined as missionary 300 years ago, but also ‘for the salvation of the whole world?’



## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- “We bishops ... must not enter into a dispute about what is a missionary territory and what is not, or who belongs to this congregation or to that congregation, saying: ‘I am one of Paul’s men,’ ‘I am one of Apollo’s,’ or ‘I am one of Cephas’; while someone else says ‘I owe my faith to Christ alone.’ What are you saying? Is there more than one Christ? (1 Cor. 1:12).
- “Let us not be like the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, who passed by the wounded man saying: ‘He does not belong to our congregation.’



## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- “In the Body of Christ there are no ‘new churches,’ there are no ‘old churches,’ for we are all living cells in that Body dependent on one another.
- “It is souls, not territories, which make the missions. The missions must not be the one aspect of the life of the Church which admits of no *aggiornamento*. What God has joined together — the Church and the missions — let no schema separate.
- “The true Catholic solution to this problem of the diversity of missions is to be found in ... transcend[ing] all juridical distinctions about congregations and giving] flexibility to missionary effort, according to diverse circumstances





## Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- “Let no one fear that he will receive less aid if some help is given to a needy brother. In the early Church, just as soon as there was ‘one heart and one soul,’ then they began to “consider all property in common” (Acts 3:32). Furthermore, if we share, then as we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians: ‘He that gathered much had nothing over. He that gathered little had no lack’ (2 Cor. 8:15)
- If we have an ecumenical spirit to brothers that are outside the Church, then let us have an ecumenical spirit to brothers who are inside the Church. Let us be charitable about the missions, remembering that the Lord who said: ‘Go teach all nations’ is the same Lord who bewailed: ‘I have mercy on the multitudes.’”



Thank **you!**