

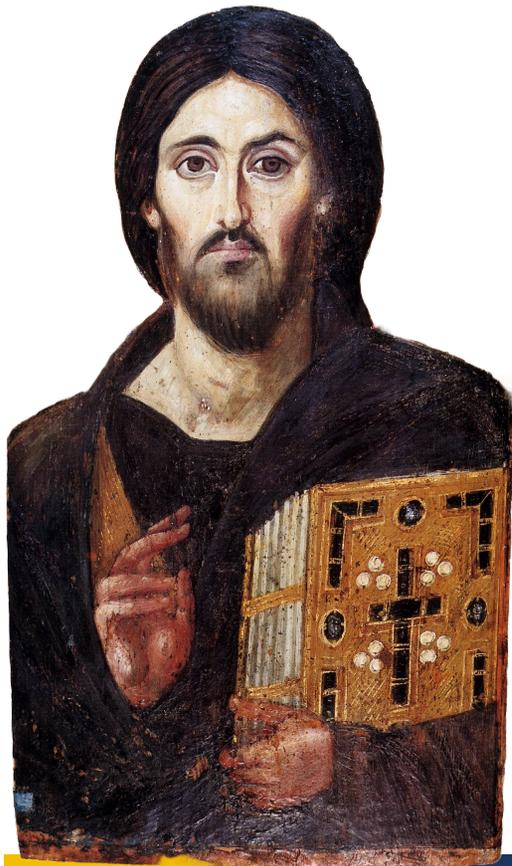
Fostering Participation in the Mission of the Church



**Msgr. Roger J. Landry • National Director, The Pontifical Mission Societies USA
Theology of the Gift Conference • Phoenix, Arizona • February 11, 2026**



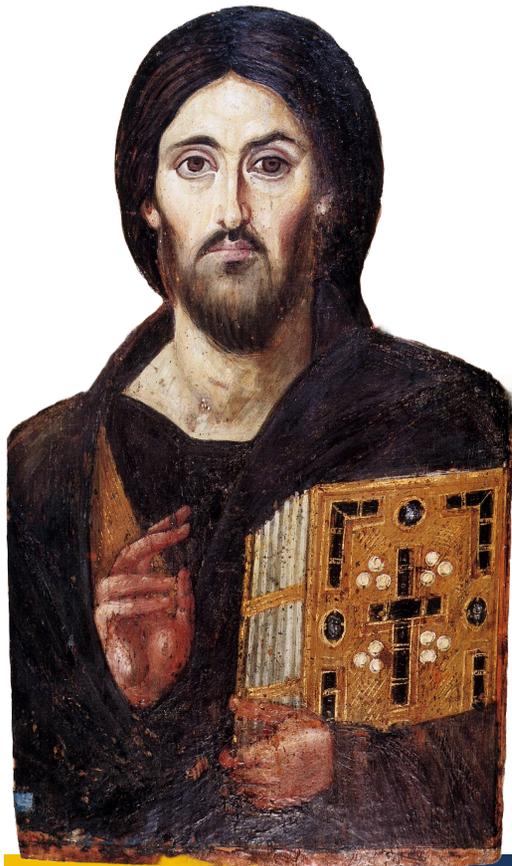
Imago Dei Dantis



- The consequential choice to ground Catholic fundraising in the “theology of the gift.”
- We are made in the image of God:
 - God is love (1 Jn 4:16).
 - God is eternal, mutual, total self-giving.
 - God is a two-fold mission: the Son is the mission of the Father and the Holy Spirit is the mission of the Father and the Son.



Imago Dei Dantis



- We — and the Church — have been made in God’s image, to love as we have been loved, to give freely as we have received freely (Mt 10:8): that is our constitutive mission.
- Pope Benedict said that the Church’s charitable activity is a “manifestation of Trinitarian love” and quotes St. Augustine who taught, “If you see charity, you see the Trinity.”



Imago Dei Dantis



- We can ponder what St. John Paul II gave us in his “theology of the body” and apply them, not to marriage, but to receiving and giving in the Church.
 - The nuptial nature of the person
 - We are made for a loving communion of persons
 - We are made for generation, for giving life
 - Sin invaded. Trust broken. Fear. Blame and competition instead of loving cooperation.
 - Recovering purity of heart (Mt 5:8 to 25:31-46)
 - Eschatological vision of communion of saints.
 - Unselfish love (chastity) and the familial dimension of the Church.





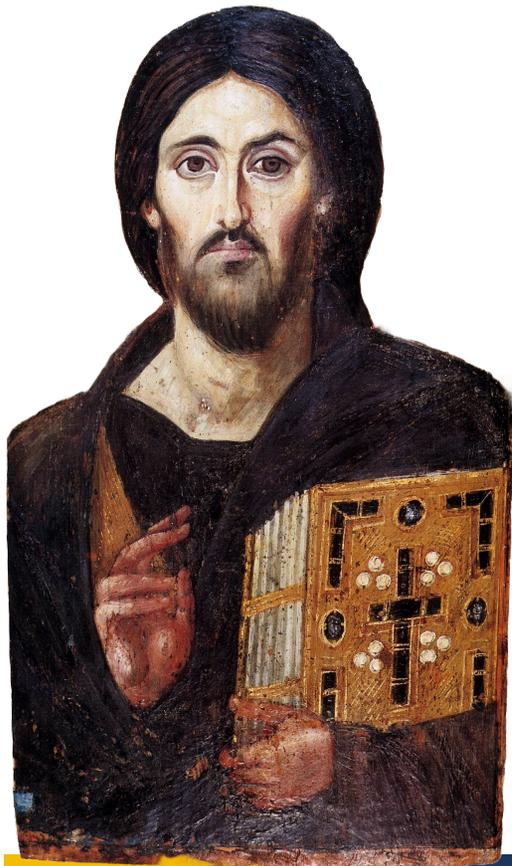
Our Mission and the Mission of the Church



- The Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar popes have underlined that the Church doesn't *have*, but *is*, a mission, literally the continuation of Christ's and the Holy Spirit's earthly missions.
- Pope Francis underlined that each of us is meant to say: "I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world" (EG 273).
- The Church, and each of us, is this mission of love, of self-giving.



Our Mission and the Mission of the Church



- Jesus specified the mission this way in his valedictory: “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And behold, **I am with you always**, until the end of the world” (Mt 28:18-20).
- The Church’s mission involves teaching others to observe what Christ has taught. It involves transforming them into the image of God.



Our Mission and the Mission of the Church



- The Church, which as Christ's Body and Bride, is the continuation of Christ's mission, does three basic things (Benedict XVI, DCE 25):
 - *Kerygma/Martyria* — Proclamation of the Faith in word and witness
 - *Leitourgia* — Prayer and the sacraments
 - *Diakonia* — Charitable service
- “These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is ... is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being” (DCE 25).



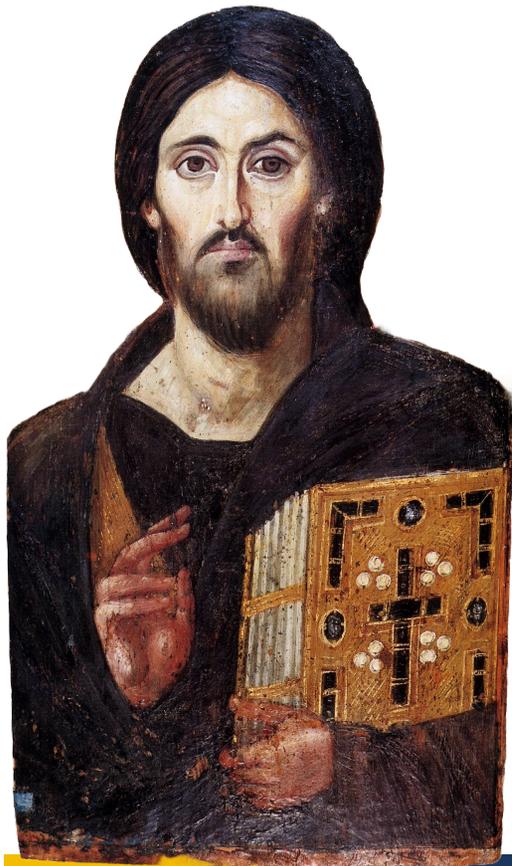
Our Mission and the Mission of the Church



- As we see in the ordination of the first deacons, “The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word” (DCE 22).
- The mission of the Church is to evangelize people fully so that they might be evangelized evangelizers, and this involves forming them by the Word of God and the life of Christ in the sacraments to use their gifts in love for God and others.



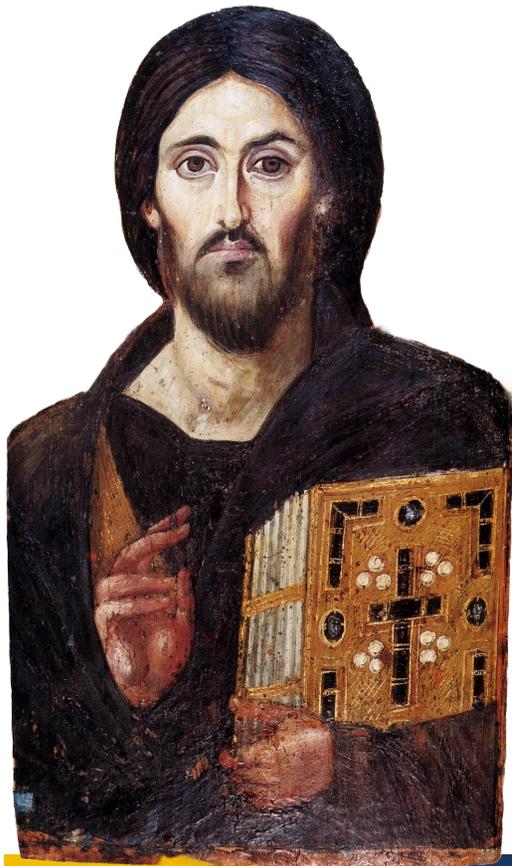
Re-reading the Gospels in a Missionary Lens



- We can re-read the Gospels in this perspective of how God was forming us to self-giving participation in his mission in and through us.
- The Annunciation to Mary
- The Annunciation to Joseph
- The Bethlehem inn-keepers
- The Shepherds and the Magi
- Simeon and Anna
- The Holy Innocents
- John the Baptist



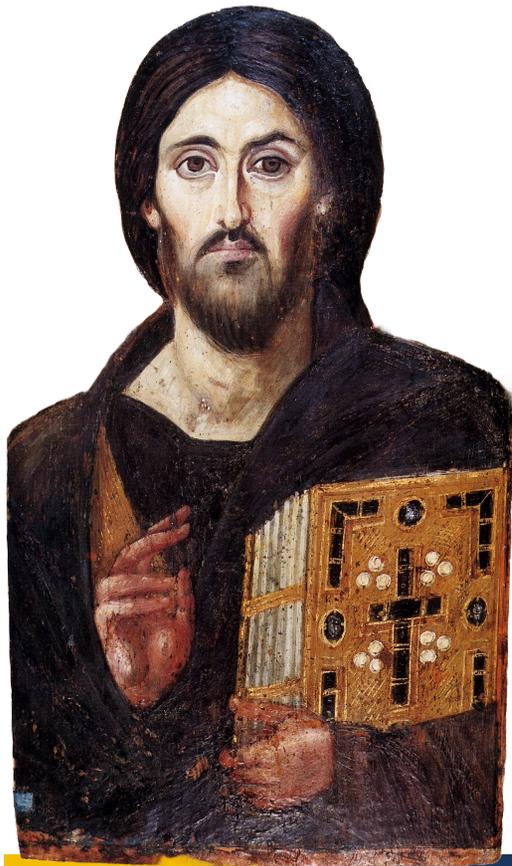
Re-reading the Gospels in a Missionary Lens



- The calling of the disciples and apostles
- The servants at the Wedding of Cana
- The women in Luke 8:3
- The apostles and the young boy in the multiplication of the loaves and fish
- The payment of the temple tax
- The invitation to the Rich Young Man
- Jesus' words about mammon, about how we can't serve two masters, and encouragement to store up a heavenly treasure.
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan



Re-reading the Gospels in a Missionary Lens



- The Parables about the Pearl of Great Price and Treasure Buried in the Field
- The parable about the rich man and the harvest in response to human greed.
- The Parable of Dives and Lazarus
- Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus
- The widow and her mite
- The man with the upper room
- Jesus' interaction with the good thief
- Joseph of Arimathea's tomb



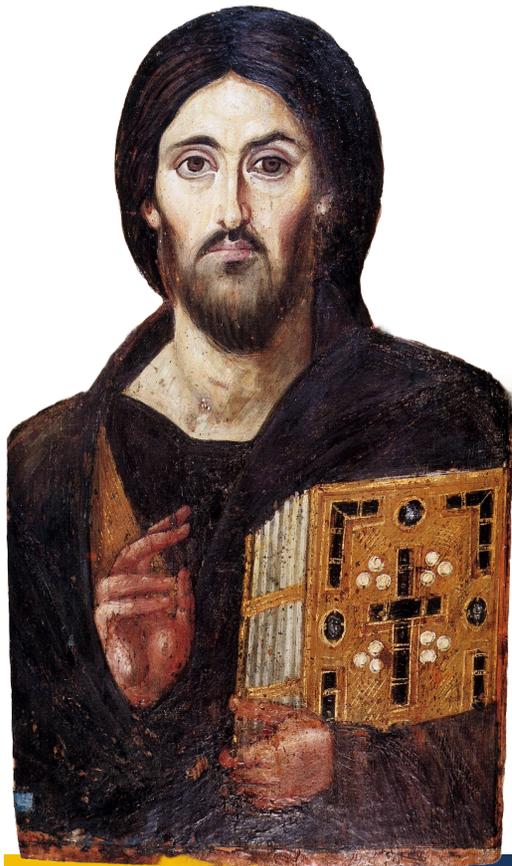
Re-reading the Gospels in a Missionary Lens



- Jesus' instructions in sending out the 12 and the 72.
 - No walking stick, sack, food, money, second tunic — This was both an indication of trust in divine providence and an invitation for others to help.
 - Stay in the house you enter, eat and drink what is offered — Receive others' gifts rather than look for a richer or better place.
 - Announce peace and that the kingdom of God is at hand — the essential message, word and witness.
 - Cure the sick — attend to people's needs. Love.
 - Wipe the dust off sandals from those who do not welcome — Don't be surprised by rejection or nurse wounds.



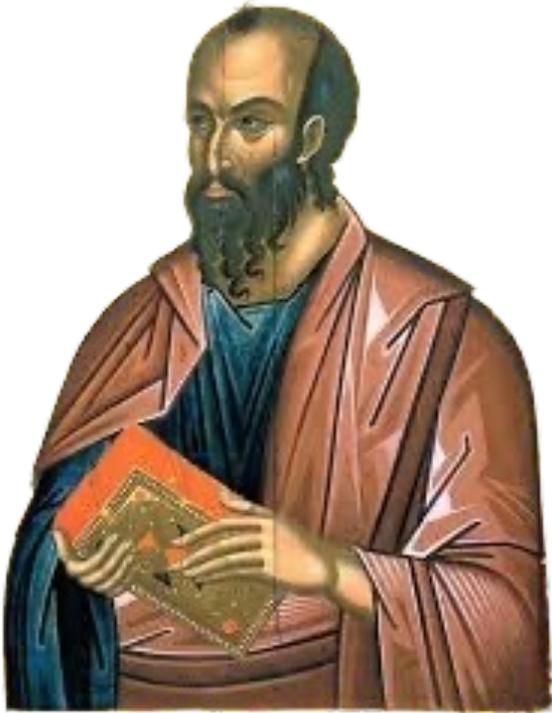
The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- As we can see, Jesus' saving work was directed to helping people not only participate in their salvation but the salvation of others. He was forming them to use their gifts to cooperate in the salvation of the world and training them to involve others in that same great commission.
- The Church seeks to continue this holistic formation of evangelized evangelizers, of gifted givers, of much-loved *agapic* lovers.



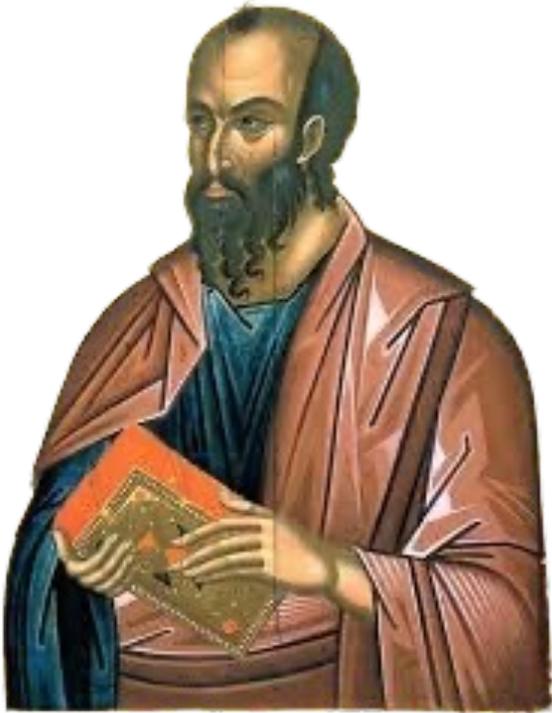
The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- St. Paul, of course, did this in the early Church, inviting people to share in the needs of sister Churches, encouraging generous and cheerful giving.
- 1 Cor 16:1-4 — “In regard to the **collection for the holy ones**, you also should do as I ordered the churches of Galatia. **On the first day of the week each of you should set aside and save whatever one can afford...**”
- Gal 6:10 — “While we have the opportunity, **let us do good to all**, but especially to those who belong to the **family of the faith.**”



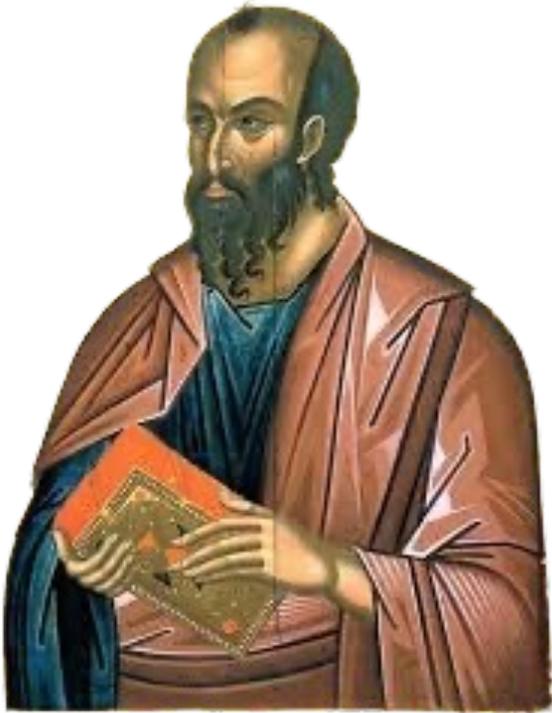
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- 1 Tim 5:17-18 — “Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching. **For the scripture says ... ‘A worker deserves his pay.’**”
- Phil 4:10-18 — “I rejoice greatly in the Lord that now at last you revived your concern for me. ... **It was kind of you to share in my distress.** You Philippians indeed know that at the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, not a single church shared with me in **an account of giving and receiving**, except you alone. For even when I was at Thessalonica **you sent me something for my needs, not only once but more than once.** It is not that I am eager for the gift; rather, **I am eager for the profit that accrues to your account.**”



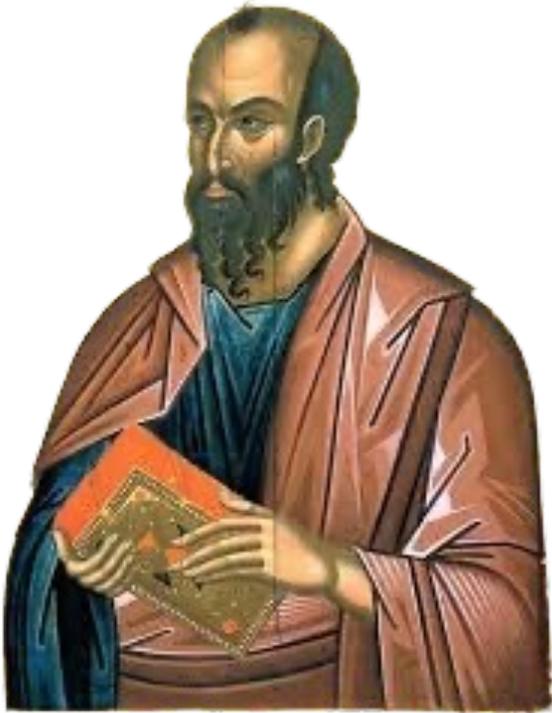
The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- 2 Cor 8 and 9 — “We want you to know, brothers, of the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia, for ... the abundance of their joy and their profound poverty overflowed in a **wealth of generosity on their part**. For ... **they begged us insistently for the favor of taking part in the service to the holy ones**. ... They gave themselves **first to the Lord** and to us through the will of God. ... **May you excel in this gracious act also**. I say this not by way of command, but **to test the genuineness of your love by your concern for others**. ...



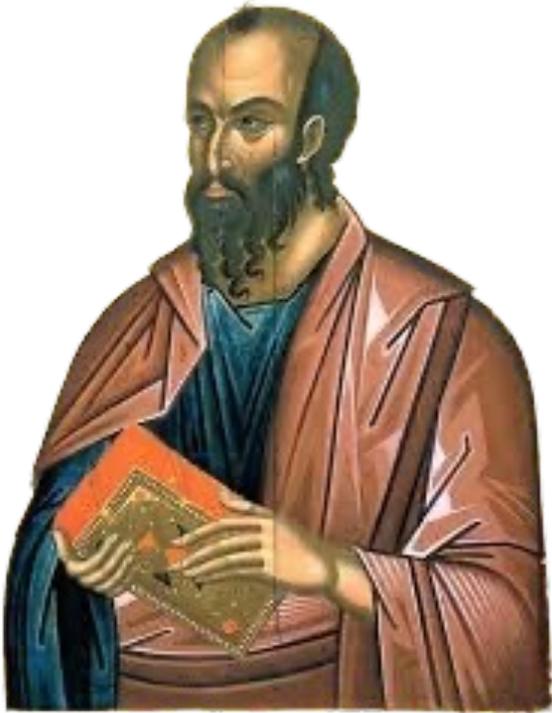
The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- “For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **for your sake he became poor** although he was rich, **so that by his poverty you might become rich.** ... It is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that ... your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs. ... So **give proof before the churches of your love** and of our boasting about you to them.”



The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- “Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and **whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully**. Each must do as already determined, **without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver**. ... You are being **enriched in every way for all generosity**, which through us **produces thanksgiving to God**. ... Through the evidence of this service, **you are glorifying God** for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and **the generosity of your contribution to them and to all others**, while in prayer on your behalf they long for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. **Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!**”



The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- Father Keiter, on Monday, talked about the growth of discipleship, mentioning that through our fostering people's generosity, we can help them grow in faith through the stages of pre-trust, trust, curiosity, openness, seeking, decision, becoming a disciple, growing as a disciple, becoming a commissioned disciple, disciple-maker and spiritual multiplier.
- In the 2007 Aparecida Document of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean, under the presidency of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, they framed growth in terms of five principal stages: encounter, conversion, discipleship, communion and mission. We can look at each of these within the perspective of fostering their growth as in the image of God the Giver.



The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- **Encounter with Jesus** — True encounter changes everything. We see this in the life of the four fishermen of Capernaum, in St. Matthew, in Mary Magdalene and so many others. This encounter changes our relationship with material things, detaching ourselves from them and becoming free to use everything for the King and his kingdom.
- **Conversion** — In conversion we turn away from idols, turn toward the true God, and then learn how to “turn with” God (con-vertere). We see this with Zacchaeus, the women of Luke 8, Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus' feet and more. Our conversion is manifested by the revolution of values shown in where we spend the resources God has placed in our hands.



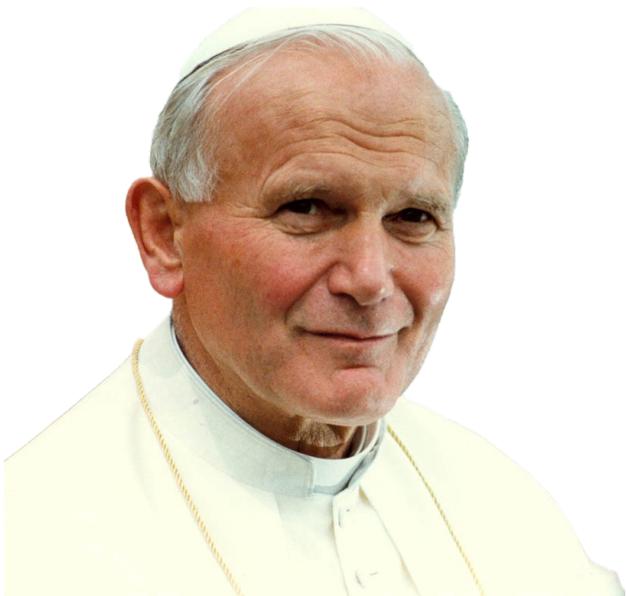
The Church Continues Jesus' Formation



- **Discipleship** — We become “zealous students” of Jesus the Master. We learn and **seek to adopt** his way of life. We begin to live not just the commandments, not just the two-fold law of love, but also the beatitudes, including the first, because God is our true treasure.
- **Communion** — Jesus prayed in Jn 17 for us to be one just as he and the Father are one in the Holy Spirit, so that the world may know that the Father sent him and loves us like he loves Jesus. This communion is first ontological, but it’s meant to become moral, as we see in the early Church in Jerusalem. We care for each other as loving family members.
- **Mission** — The fruit of this whole process is mission, is giving, not just individually but communally.



Participation in the Mission of the Church



- The Church continues this flourishing of the Christian life by facilitating people's participation in the mission of Christ.
- Vatican II's *Ad Gentes* (1965) — The Church needs to “take care of stimulating and coordinating an effective collection of funds” because the Church in missionary lands “are badly in need of the continued missionary activity of the whole Church to furnish them with those subsidies which serve for the growth of the local Church, and above all for the maturity of Christian life.”
- St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) — “Each particular church must be generous and open to the needs of the other churches. ...”





Participation in the Mission of the Church



- St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) — “The material and financial needs of the missions are many: not only to set up the Church with minimal structures (chapels, schools for catechists and seminarians, housing), but also to support works of charity, education and human promotion—a vast field of action especially in poor countries. **The missionary Church gives what she receives, and distributes to the poor the material goods that her materially richer sons and daughters generously put at her disposal.** Here I wish **to thank all those who make sacrifices and contribute to the work of the missions.**”





Participation in the Mission of the Church



- St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) — “**All that we have received from God** — life itself as well as material goods — **does not belong to us but is given to us for our use. Generosity in giving** must always be enlightened and inspired by faith: then we will truly be more blessed in giving than in receiving. ... **World Mission Day**, which seeks to heighten awareness of the missions, as well as to collect funds for them, **is an important date in the life of the Church, because it teaches how to give:** as an offering made to God, in the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world.”





Participation in the Mission of the Church



- We are living in a propitious time for the Church to remember who she is as mission.
- Last May 8, we had the election of a successor of the fisher of men from Galilee not just of the first born in the United States, but one who had given his life to the Church's mission ad gentes in Peru and as a traveling Augustinian prior general, visiting 3,000 Augustinian priests and missionaries in 50 countries.
- He said the night of his election that the Church must "proclaim the Gospel without fear, to be missionaries" and "must look for ways to be a missionary Church."



The Fields Remain White and Ripe



- Of the 8.1 billion people alive today, nearly 2,000 years after Jesus' saving life, passion, death and resurrection, 5.5 billion are not Christian.
- It's a time for a new missionary age.
- A time for more intense prayer to the Harvest Master for laborers.
- A time for more missionary saints
- A time for greater support.



The Fields Remain White and Ripe



- Across the globe, there are presently 1,130 Missionary dioceses and territories — so defined as places of first evangelization where the Church is too young, too poor or too persecuted to be self-sustaining: 530 in Africa; 483 in Asia; 71 in America; 46 in Oceania.
- They are a mix of Archdioceses (195), Dioceses (802), Apostolic Vicariates (75), Prelatures (38), Administrations (4), Territorial Abbeys (1) and Prelatures (1), Missiones Sui Iuris (8) and Military Ordinariates (6).



The Church Universal Seeks to Help By



- The Dicastery for Evangelization, which since 1622 has sought to coordinate the Church's evangelizing efforts.
- Missionary religious orders, male and female.
- Priestly Missionary Societies (like MEP, PIME, Maryknoll) and programs like Fidei Donum.
- The four Pontifical Mission Societies.



The Four Pontifical Mission Societies



- The **Society of Propagation of the Faith** (1822) founded by Blessed Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862)
- The **Missionary Childhood Association**, also known as Holy Childhood, founded by Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844)
- The **Society of St. Peter the Apostle** (1889) found by Jeanne (1859-1934) and Stephanie Bigard.
- The **Missionary Union** (1916) founded 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), a lay spiritual directee of St. John Mary Vianney.
- 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 and the Floridas as well, the Diocese of Bardstown and China.



The Society of the Propagation of the Faith



- In 2024, The Society for the Propagation of the Faith built 751 Churches.
- It gave 71.4 million for ordinary subsidies (running of dioceses, \$23m), extraordinary subsidies (building or other special projects, \$19m) and catechist subsidies (\$9m).
- It also pays half the cost of nunciatures in missionary countries, supports the Dicastery for Eastern Churches (\$3.5m), supports retired bishops in missionary territories as well as three houses for missionary students in Rome (\$8m).
- Catholics in the United States, through TPMS-USA, provided a third of those funds



The Missionary Childhood Association



- In 1843, Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844) of Nancy and Toul, talked with Pauline Jaricot about his long-term hope to work with the world's poorest children in the missions, especially in China.
- She suggested he appeal to the children of France to help children around the world. The Missionary Childhood Association, “children helping children,” 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 Missionary Childhood Association



- The Missionary Childhood Association promotes the missionary protagonism of children (through 14 years of age), the solidarity and sharing from children to help other children throughout the world, and to promote and sustain missionary vocations among children.
- In 2024, it distributed \$17.8 million: \$3.7 million in Ordinary Subsidies, \$13 million in Extraordinary Subsidies, \$43k to national directions. It supported 2,685 different projects.
- TPMS-USA contributed last year \$606k directly (sixth internationally).



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- In the late 19th century, laywoman Jeanne Bigard (1859-1924) and her mother Stephanie, in Caen, France received a letter from Bishop Jules-Alphonse Cousin in Nagasaki, asking for financial help to expand his seminary.
- They began gathering funds to support those seminarians and in 1889, 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.



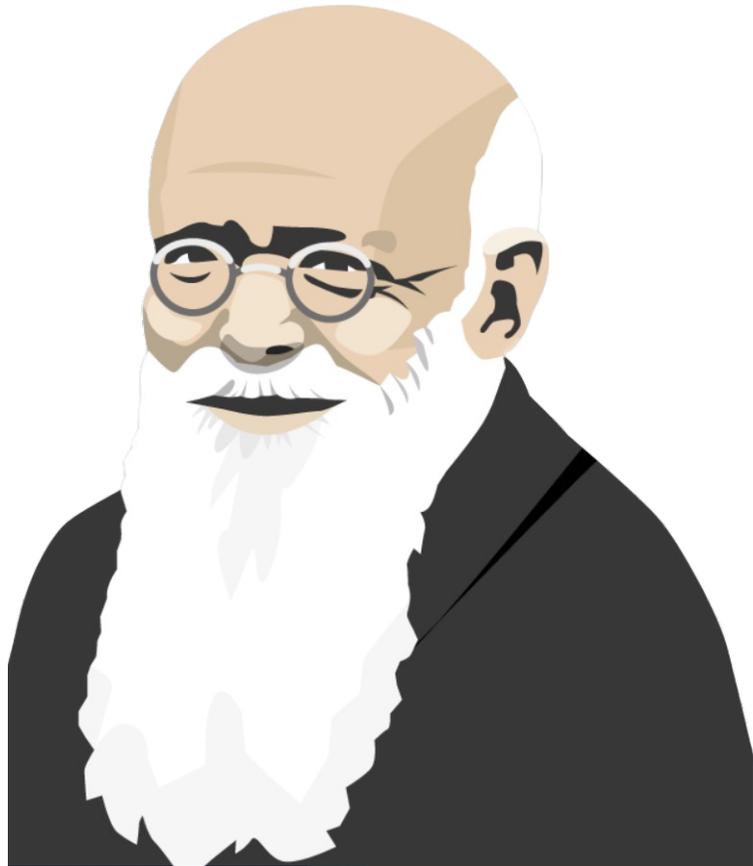
The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- The Society of St. Peter the Apostle helps train indigenous clergy and religious to replace missionaries.
- In 2024 it supported 738 seminaries and 82,592 diocesan seminarians (53,405 minor, 6,575 propaedeutic and 22,859 major seminarians). Two of every five seminarians in the world!
- It distributed \$20.7 million for ordinary subsidies for seminaries (\$14m), extraordinary subsidies for building or renovations (\$2.2m), Mass stipends for priest formators, continuing formation for priest formators (\$2.5 m), scholarships and grants for seminarians (\$310k) and religious (\$591k) to study locally.
- TPMS-USA contributed \$2.8 million to the overall total of 122 national offices.



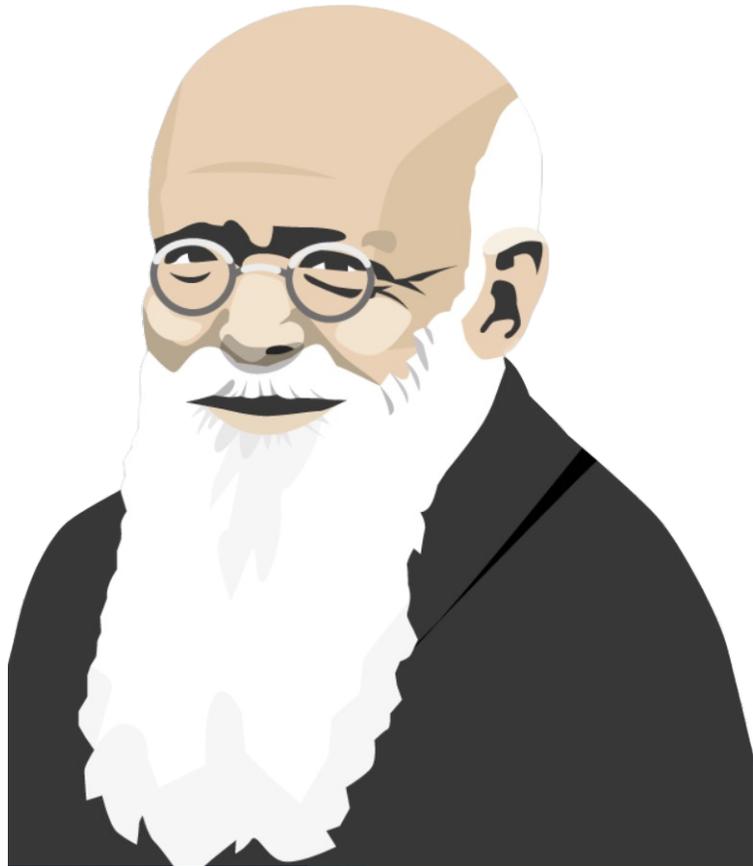
The Pontifical Missionary Union



- In 1916, Blessed Paolo Manna, PIME (1872-1952), who had served 10 years as a missionary in East Burma before having to return to Italy for health reasons, established the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.
- He spent the rest 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.**
- After establishing a seminary for missionaries, Pius XI encouraged him in 1926 to found the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions (PIME).
- The Missionary Union became Pontifical in 1956 and now focuses on missionary spirituality and formation of clergy, religious, and through them the whole people of God.



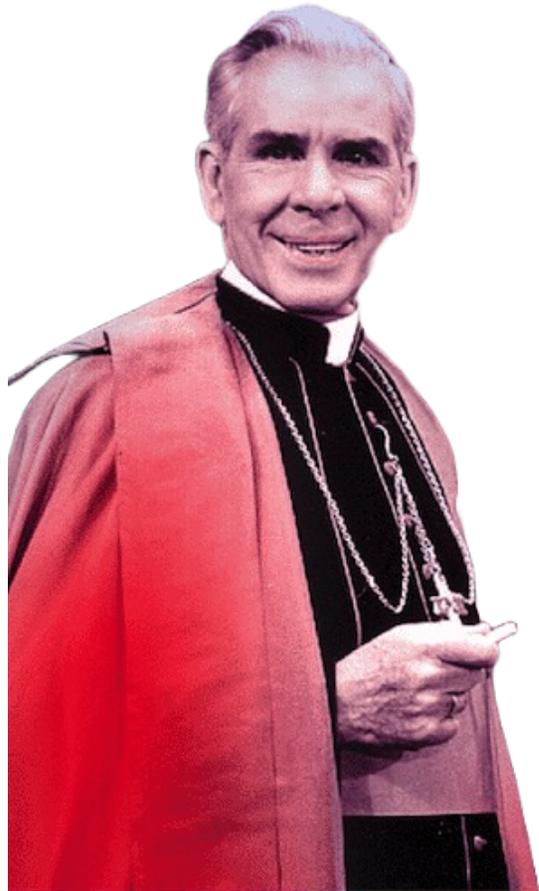
The Pontifical Mission Union



- The Pontifical Mission Union supports all of the other three Societies with prayer and formation.
- Each national TPMS director is appointed first the national director of PMU.
- PMU promotes the World Mission Sunday letters each year, sends out Biblical missionary commentaries, organizes congresses, webinars and more.
- It offers programs for national and diocesan directors at CIAM.
- PMU's funding comes from the Universal Solidarity Fund of SPOF. The overall budget for 2024 for \$407k.



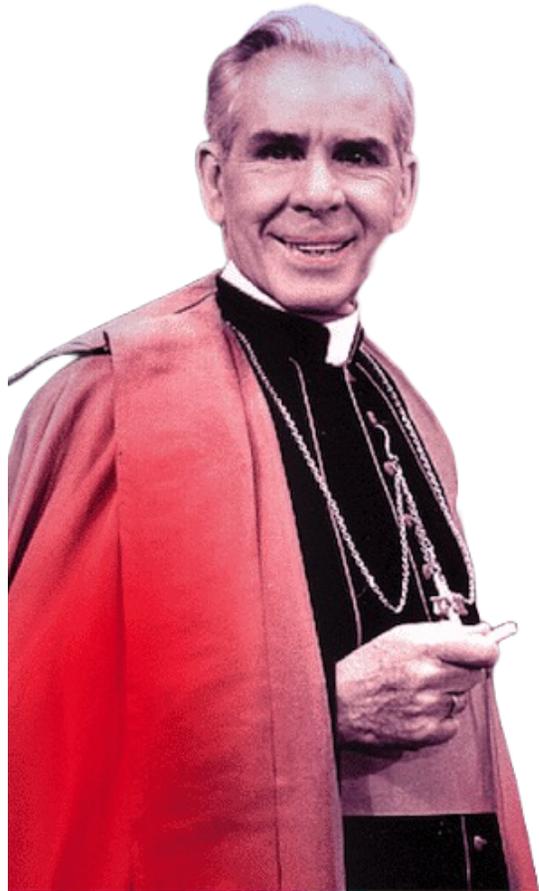
The Work of The Pontifical Mission Societies USA



- We seek to form and engage Catholics in the United States within the Church's global mission, encouraging missionary co-responsibility through prayer, sacrifice, and financial support.
- To organize and promote World Mission Month, the peak of which is World Mission Sunday on the second to last Sunday of October.
- To provide resources for dioceses, parishes, and schools to cultivate a missionary spirit and collaborate with bishops, diocesan mission directors, priests, religious, and lay leaders to foster missionary discipleship.



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)



- We were blessed 15 minutes before this conference began with the news of the upcoming beatification of Archbishop Sheen, National Director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the USA from 1950-1966.
- He raised \$200 million and donated \$10 million of his own earnings.
- He left all his books and 40 percent of his effects to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. It was his real passion in life and approaching death.
- He was super effective in helping American Catholics develop a missionary mind, heart, identity and spirituality through his work in radio and TV, his books, articles, Mission Magazine, the World Mission Rosary and more.



Pope Leo & the Formation of Missionary Disciples



- On January 24, Pope Leo published his letter for World Mission Sunday, dedicated to being “One in Christ, United in Mission.”
- "The unity of disciples is not an end in itself; it is directed towards mission. Jesus states this clearly (Jn 17:21). ... It is worth recalling the motto of Blessed Paolo Manna, ‘The entire Church for the conversion of the whole world.’ ... In fact, no baptized person is exempt from or indifferent to mission: everyone, each according to their own vocation and condition of life, participates in the great work that Christ has entrusted to his Church.”



Pope Leo & the Formation of Missionary Disciples



- Pope Leo: “If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. ... The mission of the disciples and the Church as a whole is to continue the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit: a mission born of love, lived in love, and leading to love. ... Throughout the centuries, multitudes of Christians — martyrs, confessors and missionaries — have given their lives to make this divine love known to the world. Thus, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, the Church’s evangelizing mission will continue until the end of time. ... Inspired by these testimonies, let us all commit to contributing to the great mission of evangelization — which is always a work of love —according to our own vocation and the gifts we have received.”



Pope Leo & the Formation of Missionary Disciples



- Pope Leo: “Your prayers and practical support, particularly on World Mission Day, will be a great help in bringing the Gospel of God’s love to everyone, especially the poorest and those most in need. Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion. I renew my heartfelt gratitude ‘for everything you will do to help me help missionaries throughout the world.’”
- That last quotation came from an unprecedented video Pope Leo recorded last year for World Mission Sunday, the first in history, a sign of how important he takes his role in making an ask for the same of the work of the Church. We can finish with his words.



Pope Leo & the Formation of Missionary Disciples





Thank **you!**