



The Missionary Spirituality of Priestly Life

Msgr. Roger J. Landry
National Director, The Pontifical Mission Societies USA

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Beatification of Fulton J. Sheen



- Former National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (1950-1966)
- “My greatest love has always been for the missions of the Church.”
- Raised \$200 million for the missions, gave \$10 million from his media earnings and 40 percent of his estate.
- His study, teaching, preaching, writing, convert making were all directed toward making disciples of everyone.
- His priestly life shows in an exemplary way the missionary dimension of the priesthood.



Pope Leo XIV: A Pope From the Missions



- While every pope is a successor of the apostles and called to be apostolic, Pope Leo is the first Pope since St. Peter who served as a missionary *ad gentes*.
- 22 years as a missionary priest and bishop in Peru.
- 12 years as a missionary Prior General of the Augustinians visiting its 3,000 members in 50 countries.



Pope Leo XIV: A Pope From the Missions



- Night of his election: “I thank my brother Cardinals, who have chosen me to be the Successor of Peter and to walk together with you as a Church, ... ever seeking to act as men and women faithful to Jesus Christ, in order **to proclaim the Gospel without fear, to be missionaries. ... Together, we must look for ways to be a missionary Church.**”



St. John Paul II & the Primacy of Missio ad Gentes



- Redemptoris Missio 67: “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).





St. John Paul II & the Primacy of Missio ad Gentes



- “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.”**





St. John Paul II & the Primacy of Missio ad Gentes



- “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.”





St. John Paul II & the Primacy of Missio ad Gentes



- 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.





St. John Paul II & the Primacy of Missio ad Gentes



- 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.”**





Christ's Calling of the First Priests



- 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)



Diaconal and Priestly Ordination



- 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.”
- Our prophetic *munus* by baptism and Holy Orders.
- “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)



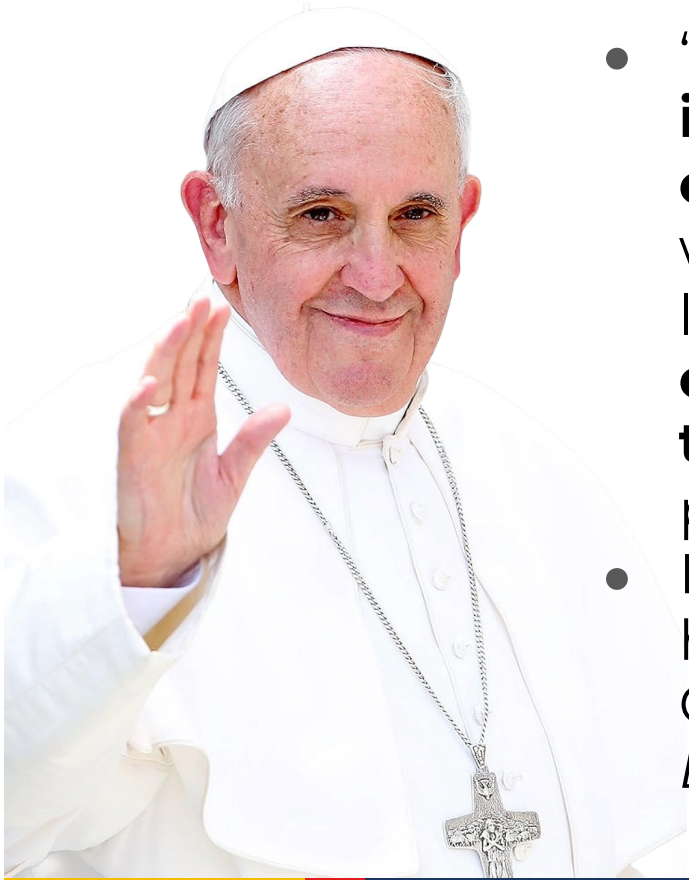
From Maintenance to Mission



- 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. Often, however, the focus can be principally on strengthening the parish.
- Pope Francis spoke of a “missionary impulse capable of transforming everything” and poignantly asked, **“What would happen if we took these words seriously?”** (EG 27, 15).
- What would happen if we went from maintenance to the **full meaning of mission** as given to us by Christ in Mt 28 and Mk 16?



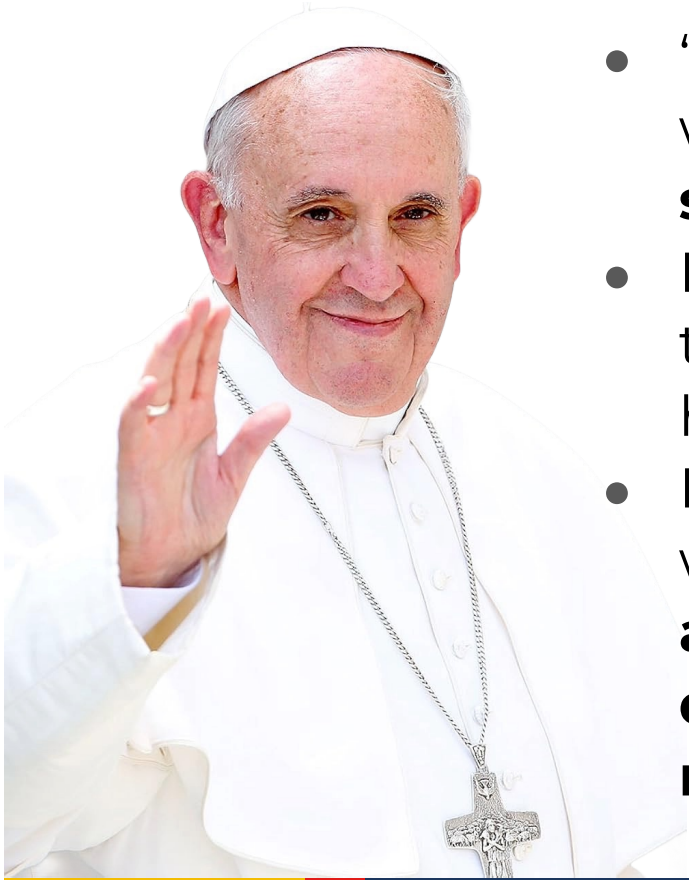
Pope Francis and Priestly Identity and Spirituality



- “I dream,” he wrote, “of a ...**missionary impulse capable of transforming everything**, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, **can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world** rather than for her self-preservation” (27).
- He tried to codify that missionary impulse in his new Apostolic Constitution for the Church, which he entitled, *Praedicate Evangelium* (“Preach the Gospel”)



Pope Francis and Priestly Identity and Spirituality



- “The primary reason for evangelizing,” he wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “is the **love and salvation of Jesus** that we have received.”
- He asked, “**What kind of love** would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known?”
- He emphasized that the Church’s missionary work is a response to that love life: “**We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive, and a message that cannot mislead or disappoint**” (264)



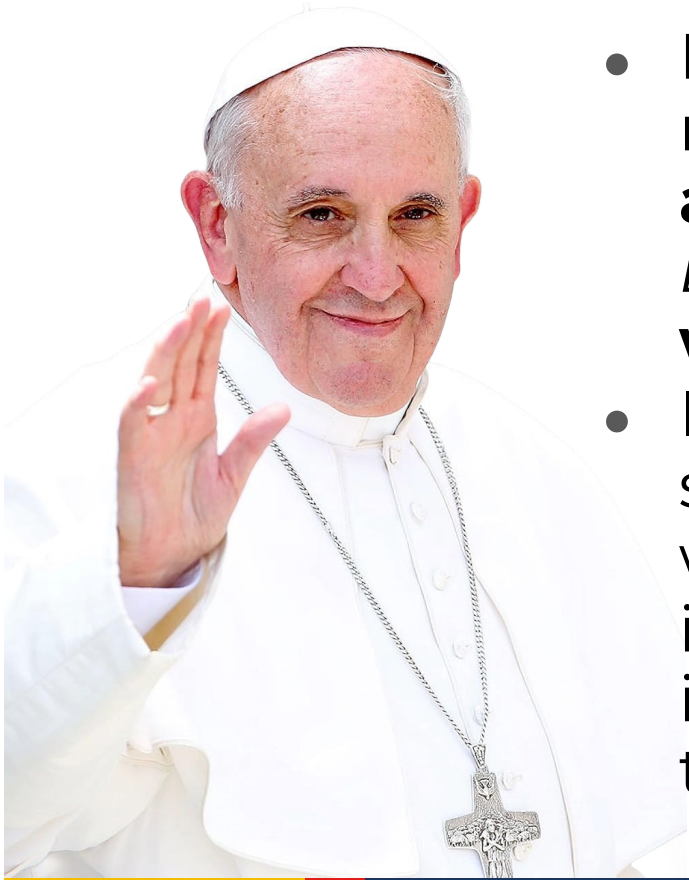
Pope Francis and Priestly Identity and Spirituality



- In one of the most eloquent passages of all his papal writings, he wrote:
- “We are convinced from personal experience that **it is not the same thing** to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. ...**We know well that with Jesus, life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize**” (265-66).



Pope Francis and Priestly Identity and Spirituality



- He has underlined that none of us *has* a mission, but each of us *is* a mission: **“I am a mission on this earth,”** he wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*. **“This is the reason why I am here.”**
- It’s clear that Pope Francis, as the successor of the Galilean fisherman whom Jesus made a “fisher of men,” identified himself and his whole priestly identity and spirituality with the mission to share the faith.



The Consecration of the USA to the Sacred Heart



- The fourth reason this should be a special year is the upcoming consecration of the USA to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- This consecration will take place during the summer meeting of the US Bishops, June 11, 2026 at the Basilica of Mary Queen of the Universe in Orlando.
- June 11 is not only the vigil of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart but the day in 1899 when Leo XIII consecrated the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- In 1999, on the exact 100th anniversary of Leo XIII's consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart, St. John Paul II, said: "The consecration of the human race in 1899 represents **an extraordinarily important step on the Church's journey** and it is still good to renew it every year on the feast of the Sacred Heart. ... The words of Leo XIII still ring true: 'We must have recourse to him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.' ... Is this not the program of the Second Vatican Council and of my own Pontificate?"
- Leo XIII's consecration was not just for the Catholics of the world, but for separated Christians and for "all those deprived of the Catholic faith."



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- Leo XIII underlined the missionary dimension of the consecration. Jesus, he said, had given himself as a ransom for all and by this action, the Church was uniting the whole human race to herself and entrusting us to his redeeming love. Jesus, he continued, came to save the lost and “shed His blood for the salvation of the whole human race.” Missionaries have been sent into the world for them, and “now, in pity for their lot with all our soul we commend them, and as far as in us lies, we consecrate them to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” In this way, this act of devotion, which We recommend, will be a blessing to all.



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- From 2023-2025, we marked the **350th anniversary** of Jesus' most significant apparitions about the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary.
- Pope Francis took advantage of the anniversary to publish an encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on October 24, 2024, which he entitled *Dilexit Nos*, "He has loved us" (Rom 8:37).
- At the end of the encyclical, 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**," he said, "**is especially evident in the work of evangelization.**"



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- 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 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).



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- Mission, Pope Francis eloquently continued, 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).
- “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).



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- 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).
- He concluded: "**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. ... **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).



The Formalization of the Church's Mission



- **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)
 - The United States was mission territory until 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 for First Evangelization (Cardinal Luis Tagle)
 - Section for 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 (1859-1934) 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), a spiritual directee of St. John Mary Vianney.
- 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 and the Floridas (Florida keys to Canada) as well as Bardtownw, Kentucky and to China.
- Continues to support 1,130 missionary dioceses across the globe.



The Missionary Childhood Association



- In 1843, Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844) of Nancy and Toul, who helped found 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, especially in China.
- 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," 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.



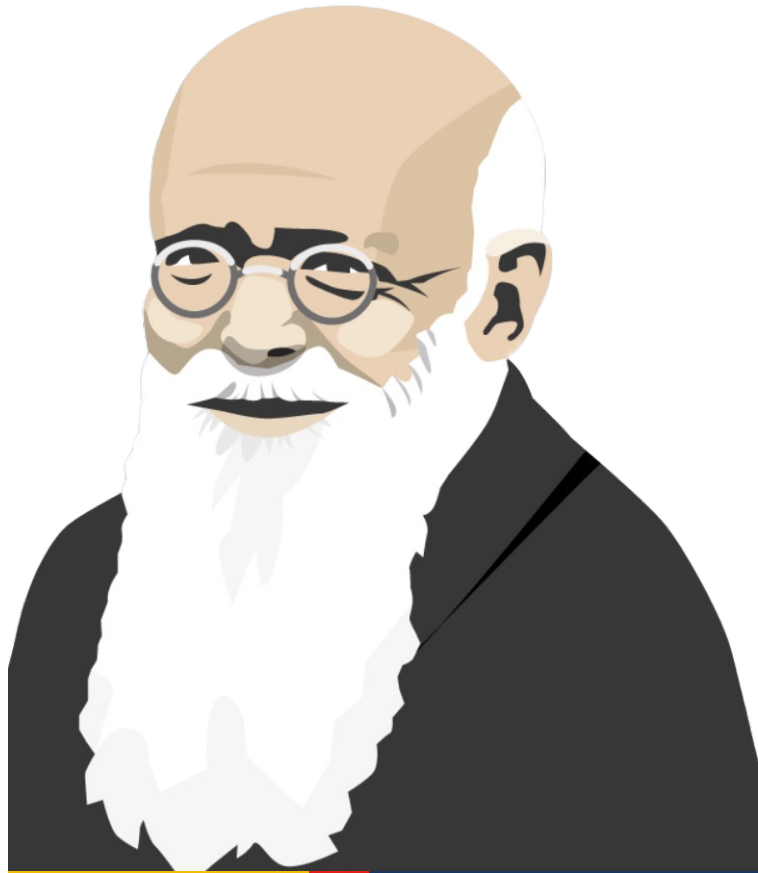
The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- In the late 19th century, 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. Today nearly 82,498 seminarians in Africa, Asia, Oceania and other missionary fields are supported with an annual stipend, as well as tens of thousands of 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 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.
- 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.”
- The Missionary Union became Pontifical in 1956.
- It focuses on missionary spirituality and formation of clergy, religious, and through them the whole people of God.



The Pontifical Mission Societies



- There are 122 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 Work of The Pontifical Mission Societies USA



- 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**.



An Important Centenary



- On April 14, 1926, Pope Pius XI responded to a request from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith (SPOF) for a “a day of prayer and propaganda for the missions to be celebrated on the same day in every Catholic diocese, parish and institute in the world.” This was to “foster understanding of the greatness of the missionary task, encourage zeal among the clergy and the people; offer an opportunity to make SPOF ever more widely known and encourage offerings for the missions.”
- This is World Mission Sunday, which will take place this year on October 18.



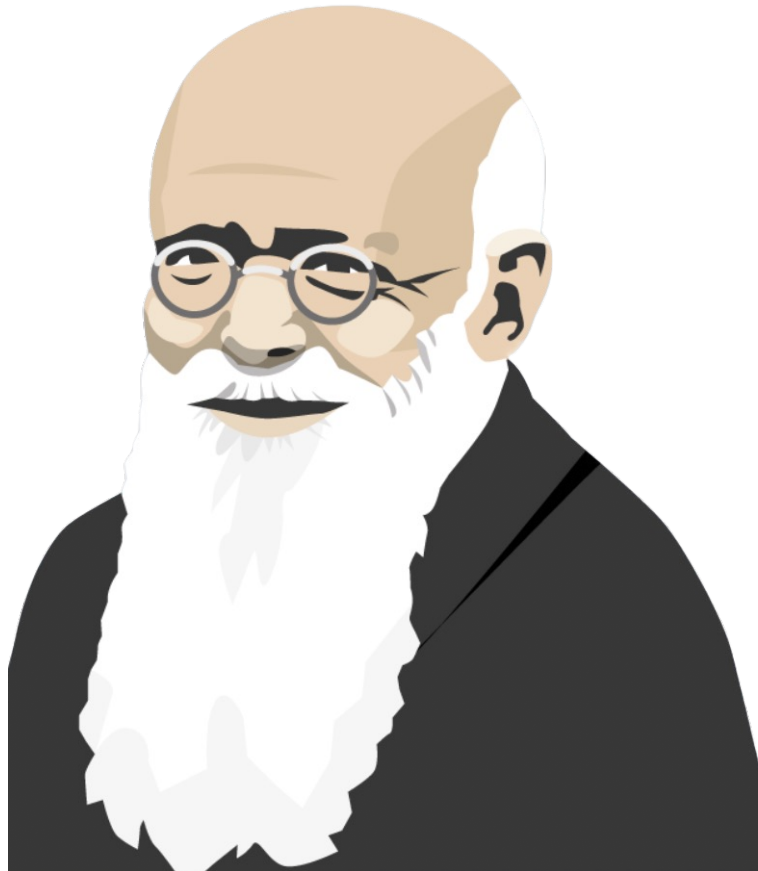
Practical Ideas on Praying for the Missions



- Mass for the Evangelization of Peoples (Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions #18, A and B)
- Prayers of the Faithful at Mass for the Church's missionary work, for missionaries, for the suffering Church in missionary areas (like in Nigeria, where more Christians are killed every year than in all other countries combined).
- World Mission Rosary created by Archbishop Sheen.
- Holy Hours for the Church's Missions, either in World Mission Month, on Thursdays, or on other opportune occasions
- Parish missions or Days of Recollection led by missionaries on missionary themes



Practical Ideas on Forming for the Missions



- World Mission Month
- World Mission Sunday
- Study of the Annual Message for World Mission Day
- Mission Trips
- Mission Magazine subscriptions and reading groups.
- MCA Modules in Religious Education Programs
- Study of the great missionary documents of the Church: *Ad Gentes* (1965), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013).
- Book studies on great missionaries or on accessible missiology.
- Use and catechesis on the blessing and dismissal: “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” What “*Ite, missa est*” means.



Practical Ideas on Preaching the Missions



- World Mission Month
- World Mission Sunday
- When the Gospel Passages are about the Church's mission — when Jesus sends out the 12 or the 72 or the Great Commission.
- A regular focus on missionary discipleship.
- On the major feasts of mission, like Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, Epiphany, the Visitation, Birth and Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, Good Shepherd Sunday, Christ the King.



Practical Ideas on Preaching the Missions



- On the feast of missionary saints, including applications on Sundays. For example: St. Paul, St. Barnabas, SS. Timothy and Titus, St. Peter, any of the apostles, any of the evangelists, St. John the Baptist, St. Francis Xavier, St. Therese, St. Francis de Sales, St. Dominic, the North American Martyrs, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. John Neumann, St. Junipero Serra, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, St. Mother Theodore Guerin, St. Peter Claver, St. Peter Chanel, St. Peter Canisius, SS. Cyril and Methodius, St. Philip Neri and others.



Practical Ideas on Supporting the Missions



- World Mission Sunday
 - Only collection in the Code of Canon Law (791)
 - Supports Pope's 1,120 Missionary territories and lands
 - Administered by The Pontifical Mission Societies
- Missionary Cooperative Appeal
 - Started in the Archdiocese of Newark
 - Funds raised go to the missionary congregation or mission diocese.
- Diocesan and Parish Mission Partnerships



Practical Ideas on Supporting the Missions



- Mass Stipends for the Missions
 - Many priests survive only on a daily Mass stipend, from which they also support their parish and poor families.
 - TPMS USA gives hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to bishops for the survival of their priests.
- St. Peter the Apostle
 - Many take up a collection on Good Shepherd Sunday.
 - Adopt a priest (\$3,650 a year, or more)
 - Adopt a seminarian (\$700 a year)
- Missionary Childhood Association
 - Many countries take up a collection on the Epiphany
 - Others give on October 1
- Wills, Trusts, Annuities, Qualified Charitable Distributions, DAFs, Life Insurance, Real Estate

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Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you teach."

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts. You may also follow postings of articles, homilies and teachings on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

You can also subscribe to the podcast of daily homilies, lectures and talks through Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and iHeart Podcasts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Msgr. Roger J. Landry



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Blood of the Lord, June 22, 2025

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Thank **you!**