



Our life is mission



Parish Resource Booklet

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH • OCTOBER 2019

Our life is mission

... throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §25

Opening his letter 'for the centenary of the promulgation of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* on the activity of missionaries in the world', Pope Francis notes that the challenge for the work of mission is 'as urgent as ever'. October 2019 provides an opportunity to take up again 'with renewed fervor the missionary transformation of the Church's life and pastoral activity'.

The church has a rich tradition upon which to build missionary activity. The tradition draws its strength from the person of Jesus, who through his life, death and resurrection revealed God's gracious desire to be among people.

Jesus is at the heart of all evangelising and missionary activity. It is from Jesus that we draw our strength and inspiration. It is to Jesus that we bring our hopes for ourselves, the church and the world, and it is with Jesus that we walk from the darkness of the tomb into the light of the world. We are called to be the light, to be people of mercy, to spread the Good News.

All of us are aware, however, of the many challenges facing the missionary activity of the church. Some of us have been formed in the idea that mission is something that occurs in other places. Those of us who have had the experience of Catholic education would all have raised money for 'the missions' at some point—all those walk-a-thons, cake stalls, cent-a-thons! In recent years, we have gradually become aware that this approach is complemented by a more immediate personal responsibility for mission—that all the baptised have an immediate missionary imperative. Pope Francis reminds us that 'Every man and woman is mission; that is the reason for our life on this earth' (message for World Mission Day 2018) and that 'I am a mission always; you are a mission always' (message for World Mission Day 2019).

The context in which we are called to be missionary also poses some challenges for us. In meeting with representatives of the Italian Church in Florence in 2015, Pope Francis identified three traits to be cultivated in the church: humility, selflessness and blessedness.



Further, he observed that

today we do not live an era of change, but rather in a change of era. The situations we live today, then, pose new challenges for us [and] are sometimes also difficult to understand. Our times call us to live the problems as challenges, not as obstacles: the Lord is active and at work in the world. You, therefore, go out through the streets and go to the crossroads: everyone [you] can find, call them, excluding no one (cf. Mt 22:9). Above all, accompany those left at the roadside, 'the lame, the crippled, the blind, the deaf' (Mt 15:30). Wherever you are, do not ever build walls or borders, but piazzas and field hospitals.

This Extraordinary Missionary Month offers us an opportunity to renew our efforts to grow in discipleship with the Lord. So let us accept this gracious invitation for the month of October. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and renew our personal relationship with him. Let us draw upon our ancestors in faith and join our footsteps with theirs as we go out to all the world to proclaim the Good News: "Throughout the world, let us be "permanently in a state of mission" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §25).

About this resource

Entering into the Extraordinary Missionary Month

This resource has been prepared to assist individuals and groups to enter into the Extraordinary Missionary Month.

The resource contains:

- the Prayer for the Extraordinary Missionary Month: the prayer can be downloaded as a prayer card or reproduced in newsletters and bulletins during October. And perhaps, throughout October, all meetings could commence with the Missionary Month prayer.
- a reflection by Fr Noel Connelly SSC: 'Mission—God's liberating plan for the universe.' This reflection contains some questions for personal reflection and could be used as a formation tool in a meeting or as a resource for group discussion
- Pope Francis' message for World Mission Day 2019, for individual and group use
- some tips on how to live the Missionary Month
- newsletter and bulletin notices for the Missionary Month
- a reflection on saints in the Catholic tradition
- reflection sheets based on the gospels for the Sundays in October.

In addition, a calendar has been prepared that contains a short reflection or scripture text for the days of October. The text can be used as a daily reflection, or downloaded in its entirety from www.catholicmission.org.au/emm.



REFLECTION SHEETS

The reflection sheets are formed around the gospel for each Sunday in October. Because everything starts with our personal relationship with Jesus, the sheets offer an opportunity to engage in the gospel for the Sunday of the week and to ponder how Jesus is revealed to us as we encounter the text. The four Sundays of October offer a chronological reading of parts of chapters 17 and 18 of Luke's Gospel:

- **27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (6 October):**
Luke 17:5–10 explores what it means to have faith
- **28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (13 October):**
Luke 17:1–11 tells the story of the healing of the ten lepers—and of the one who returned in thanks
- **29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (20 October):**
on World Mission Sunday, Luke 18:1–8 presents us with the example of the widow who seeks justice, demonstrating the need to pray.
- **30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (27 October):**
following from the previous Sunday, Luke 18:9–14 invites us to reflect on what attitude we bring to God in prayer.

Each weekly reflection focuses on the gospel of the Sunday, and the first step is to sit with the gospel and to encounter Jesus in the Word. The following guiding questions are offered to assist with this:

A personal response: I think about my life

- What is God asking me to listen to?
- What does God want me to pay attention to?
- What is God prompting, directing, leading and guiding me to in this reading?

Broadening our thinking: I think about my community and the world

- What is God asking of us at this time? What does God want us to attend to in our community or our world?
- What is God prompting, directing, leading and guiding us towards?

A short reflection is offered that may assist with further reflection on the gospel, and the prayer sheet concludes with an opportunity to consider how we can be missionary



disciples in our context. Pope Francis consistently encourages four actions when he writes about the gospel imperative for mission:

Encounter

‘I invite Christians, everywhere, at this very moment to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.’

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §3

- How can I accept this invitation to encounter Jesus in my daily life of faith?

Accompany

If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realise that every person is worthy of our giving.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §274

- How will I accompany others this week?

Community

The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §24

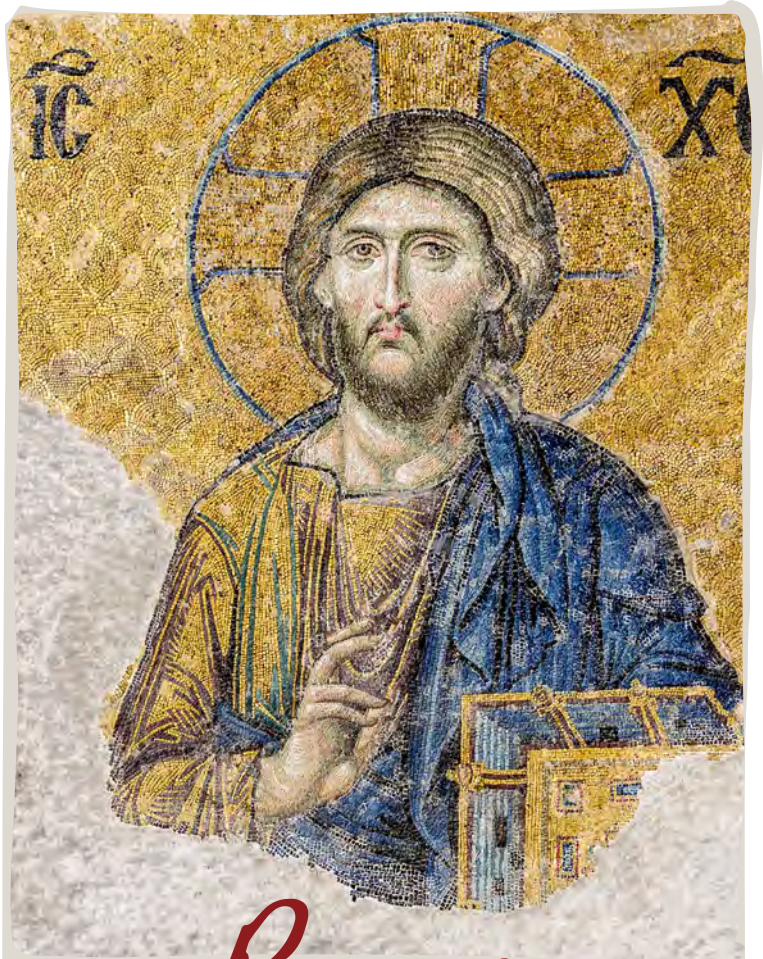
- How will I encourage others in my community to go forth this week in a missionary spirit?

Go forth

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §127

- How will I accept the challenge of preaching the Good News in word and action this week to people and communities on the margins, locally and globally?



Prayer

FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

Heavenly Father,
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ
rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers
to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’
and you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion,
may find new and efficacious expressions
that bring life and light to the world.

Help us make it possible for all peoples
to experience the saving love
and mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Pope Francis' message

Baptized and Sent:
The Church of Christ on Mission in the World

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For the month of October 2019, I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV (30 November 1919). Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

The title of the present Message is the same as that of October's Missionary Month: Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World. Celebrating this month will help us first to rediscover the missionary dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ, a faith graciously bestowed on us in baptism. Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life. This divine life is not a product for sale—we do not practise proselytism—but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission. We received this gift freely and we share it freely (cf. Mt 10:8), without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation (cf. 1 Tim 2:4; *Lumen Gentium*, 48).

The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God's own eyes and heart. Hope opens us up to the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share. Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth (cf. Mic 5:4; Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:18). A Church that presses forward to

the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion. How many saints, how many men and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness, this going forth in mercy, is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness (cf. 2 Cor 5:14–21)! The man who preaches God must be a man of God (cf. *Maximum Illud*).

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God's love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God's love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life (cf. Eph 1:3–6).

**This missionary mandate
touches us personally:
I am a mission ...**

This life is bestowed on us in baptism, which grants us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, the conqueror of sin and death. Baptism gives us rebirth in God's own image and likeness, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. In this sense, baptism is truly necessary for salvation for it ensures that we are always and everywhere sons and daughters in the house of the Father, and never orphans, strangers or slaves. What in the Christian is a sacramental reality—whose fulfillment is found in the Eucharist—remains the vocation and destiny of every man and woman in search of conversion and salvation. For baptism fulfils the promise of the gift of God that makes everyone a son or daughter in the Son. We are children of our natural parents, but in baptism we receive the origin of all fatherhood and true motherhood: no one can have God for a Father who does not have the Church for a mother (cf. Saint Cyprian, *De Cath. Eccl.*, 6).

Our mission, then, is rooted in the fatherhood of God and the motherhood of the Church. The mandate given by the Risen Jesus at Easter is inherent in Baptism: as the Father



has sent me, so I send you, filled with the Holy Spirit, for the reconciliation of the world (cf. Jn 20:19–23; Mt 28:16–20). This mission is part of our identity as Christians; it makes us responsible for enabling all men and women to realize their vocation to be adoptive children of the Father, to recognize their personal dignity and to appreciate the intrinsic worth of every human life, from conception until natural death. Today's rampant secularism, when it becomes an aggressive cultural rejection of God's active fatherhood in our history, is an obstacle to authentic human fraternity, which finds expression in reciprocal respect for the life of each person. Without the God of Jesus Christ, every difference is reduced to a baneful threat, making impossible any real fraternal acceptance and fruitful unity within the human race.

The universality of the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ led Benedict XV to call for an end to all forms of nationalism and ethnocentrism, or the merging of the preaching of the Gospel with the economic and military interests of the colonial powers. In his Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, the Pope noted that the Church's universal mission requires setting aside exclusivist ideas of membership in one's own country and ethnic group. The opening of the culture and the community to the salvific newness of Jesus Christ requires leaving behind every kind of undue ethnic and ecclesial introversion. Today too, the Church needs men and women who, by virtue of their baptism, respond generously to the call to leave behind home, family, country, language and local Church, and to be sent forth to the nations, to a world not yet transformed by the sacraments of Jesus Christ and his holy Church. By proclaiming God's word, bearing witness to the Gospel and celebrating the life of the Spirit, they summon to conversion, baptize and offer Christian salvation, with respect for the freedom of each person and in dialogue with the cultures and religions of the peoples to whom they are sent. The *missio ad gentes*, which is always necessary for the Church, thus contributes in a fundamental way to the process of ongoing conversion in all Christians. Faith in the Easter event of Jesus; the ecclesial mission received in baptism; the geographic and cultural detachment from oneself and one's own home; the need for salvation from sin and liberation from personal and social evil: all these demand the mission that reaches to the very ends of the earth.

This divine life is not a product for sale—we do not practise proselytism—but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission.

The providential coincidence of this centenary year with the celebration of the Special Synod on the Churches in the Amazon allows me to emphasize how the mission entrusted to us by Jesus with the gift of his Spirit is also timely and necessary for those lands and their peoples. A renewed Pentecost opens wide the doors of the Church, in order that no culture remain closed in on itself and no people cut off from the universal communion of the faith. No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption, in the self-referentiality of his or her own ethnic and religious affiliation. The Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all.

Here I am reminded of the words of Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of the meeting of Latin American Bishops at Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007. I would like to repeat these words and make them my own: 'Yet what did the acceptance of the Christian faith mean for the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean? For them, it meant knowing and welcoming Christ, the unknown God whom their ancestors were seeking, without realizing it, in their rich religious traditions. Christ is the Saviour for whom they were silently longing. It also meant that they received, in the waters of Baptism, the divine life that made them children of God by adoption; moreover, they received the Holy Spirit who came to make their cultures fruitful, purifying them and developing the numerous seeds that the incarnate Word had planted in them, thereby guiding them along the paths of the Gospel ... The Word of God, in becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, also became history and culture. The utopia of going back to breathe life into the pre-Columbian religions, separating them from Christ and from the universal Church, would not be a step forward: indeed, it would be a step back. In reality, it would be a retreat towards a stage in history anchored

in the past' (Address at the Inaugural Session, 13 May 2007: Insegnamenti III, 1 [2007], 855–856).

We entrust the Church's mission to Mary our Mother. In union with her Son, from the moment of the Incarnation the Blessed Virgin set out on her pilgrim way. She was fully involved in the mission of Jesus, a mission that became her own at the foot of the Cross: the mission of cooperating, as Mother of the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith.

I would like to conclude with a brief word about the Pontifical Mission Societies, already proposed in *Maximum Illud* as a missionary resource. The Pontifical Mission Societies serve the Church's universality as a global network of support for the Pope in his missionary commitment by prayer, the soul of mission, and charitable offerings from Christians throughout the world. Their donations assist the Pope in the evangelization efforts of particular Churches (the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith), in the formation of local

clergy (the Pontifical Society of Saint Peter the Apostle), in raising missionary awareness in children (Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood) and in encouraging the missionary dimension of Christian faith (Pontifical Missionary Union). In renewing my support for these Societies, I trust that the extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 will contribute to the renewal of their missionary service to my ministry.

To men and women missionaries, and to all those who, by virtue of their baptism, share in any way in the mission of the Church, I send my heartfelt blessing.

—From the Vatican, 9 June 2019,
the Solemnity of Pentecost

Living the Extraordinary Missionary Month

Mission—God's liberating plan for the universe

—Fr Noel Connolly SSC

I am a Columban missionary priest and mission is my life. However, mission is a frequently misused word. I often wish I could invent a new word.

Traditionally, mission has been seen in terms of church growth through individual conversions, or as the expansion of the church into foreign lands. But while the growth of the church is important, mission is not primarily about the extension of the church. It is something more profound than that.

The major change in the meaning of mission came with *Ad Gentes*, the missionary document of the Second Vatican Council. The bishops rejected the prepared schema and, in late 1964, asked a committee assisted by Yves Congar and Joseph Ratzinger to prepare a new document. This committee went back to the Trinity to ground mission:

'The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father' (*Ad Gentes*, §2).

Up till then, the church was the principal agent of mission. The church chose missionaries and sent them out so that they could save people by their being baptised and joining the church. It was a church-centred vision of mission. The committee reminded the bishops that mission flows directly from the nature of God, a loving community of three persons. Their love for one another gives birth to creation. And like parents, the Trinity continues to love creation, wanting to draw it into its own divine life. It is God's mission. God has a liberating plan for the universe, including us. God wants the world to reveal who God is: love, community, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice. The three persons of the Trinity are constantly creating, healing, reconciling, transforming and uniting

Living the Extraordinary Missionary Month

Some suggestions

I'VE GOT 5 MINUTES...

- Be still.
- Offer whatever rises in your heart to God.
- Pray the *EMM prayer* (on p. 4).
- Take the psalm response for the day into your heart and pray it throughout the day.
- Read the calendar entry for the day.

I'VE GOT 10 MINUTES...

- Be still.
- Offer whatever rises in your heart to God.
- Read the gospel of the day or from the previous Sunday and allow a word or a phrase to remain with you throughout the day.
- Read *Fr Connolly's reflection* (p. 7) and reflect on 'mission'.



FOR TEAMS

- Consider reproducing the *EMM prayer* in the bulletin or newsletter each week.
- Consider gathering a group to discuss *Fr Connolly's reflection*.
- Throughout October, have a prayer dedicated to mission (see samples opposite) that could be prayed daily or weekly by all members of the community.
- In the home, parishes and schools, offer a renewal of baptism promises during October as a reminder that by virtue of our baptism, we are all called to be missionary disciples.
- Choose a hymn that can be used throughout October in liturgical celebrations—for example, 'The voice of God' (CWBII 621) or 'We are called' (CWBII 476).
- Consider gathering for a lunch or offering an opportunity where attendees can share their personal experiences of faith and develop a shared mission story.
- Consider gathering small groups to pray and read about mission. A reading of *Evangelii Gaudium* may assist with this.

I'VE GOT MORE TIME (EITHER ON MY OWN OR IN A GROUP)

- Be still.
- Use the reflection sheet for the relevant week.
- Read and discuss *Fr Connolly's reflection*, perhaps with some friends.
- Read and discuss the *Pope's message* for World Mission Sunday 2019.
- Read one of the relevant Vatican documents such as *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- If you are in a group, share, listen to and reflect on each other's thoughts.



Newsletter notices and prayers

WEEK 1

Opening his letter 'For the Centenary of the Promulgation of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* on the activity of missionaries in the world', Pope Francis notes that the challenge for the work of mission is 'as urgent as ever'. October 2019 provides an opportunity to take up again 'with renewed fervor the missionary transformation of the Church's life and pastoral activity'. In this first week of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, let us consider how we, in our own contexts, might accept the invitation to encounter Jesus in daily life in order to live out our baptism call to be missionary disciples.

I invite Christians, everywhere, at this very moment to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do to this unfailingly each day.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §3

WEEK 2

In this second week of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, we are invited to pray with three of the great saints of the Catholic tradition: St Teresa of Jesus (Tuesday), St Ignatius of Antioch (Thursday) and St Luke the Evangelist (Friday). Robert Ellsberg writes that each saint 'is a living Gospel. They have all, in some partial way, embodied—literally incarnated—the challenge of faith in their time and place, and so opened a path that others might follow' (Robert Ellsberg, 'Meet the Famous Franciscan Saints', St Anthony Messenger, 25 September 2017). May we, too, rise to the challenge of our time and place, and continue to invite people into the mission of Jesus.

WEEK 3

The Church is on mission in the world.

—Pope Francis, message for Mission Sunday 2019

During the third week of this Extraordinary Missionary Month, we reflect on how all the baptised, in small daily steps, contribute to the work of mission: 'Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God's own eyes and heart' (message for Mission Sunday 2019). May our eyes and heart be opened to the needs of the world around us as we encourage a missionary spirit in our communities this week.

WEEK 4

The Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all.

—Pope Francis, message for Mission Sunday 2019

In this, the fourth week of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, we reflect on how we, too, can further the work of inviting people into the life of the Jesus—the Jesus who brings hope and restores dignity through both word and action.

SUGGESTED PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

For the work of mission:

that the faith of the baptised will be strengthened by a renewed encounter with Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

For the work of mission:

that the flame of faith will be strengthened in those gathered around this table.

Lord, hear us.

For the work of mission:

that those gathered around this table will go out and witness to God's love in our homes and neighbourhoods, and to people and communities on the margins, here in Australia and throughout our world.

Lord, hear us.

The Saints of October

Gerard W. Hughes writes that a saint is one who 'has discovered his/her deepest desire. They then "do their own thing", which is also God's thing. Their will and God's will are in harmony, so that their lives are characterised by a continuous peace, tranquillity, freedom and joy, even—perhaps especially—in crises and suffering' (*God of Surprises*, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008, p. 62).

When we reflect on the stories of the saints' lives, we may notice that the one thing they have in common—regardless of their age or circumstances—was their overwhelming desire to spread the word of God. They become, in a sense, the model of the missionary disciple. Each unique in their own way, with their own story formed by their time, they fixed their minds and hearts on God.



THE MONTH OF OCTOBER IS RICH WITH CELEBRATIONS OF THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS:

- 1 October** Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (memorial)—patron of foreign missions
- 2 October** The Holy Guardian Angels (memorial)
- 4 October** St Francis of Assisi (memorial)
- 7 October** Our Lady of the Rosary (memorial)
- 9 October** *Saints Denis and companions*
Saint John Leonardi
- 11 October** *St John XXIII*
- 14 October** Saint Callistus I
- 15 October** Saint Teresa of Jesus (memorial)

- 16 October** *Saint Hedwig*
Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque
- 17 October** Saint Ignatius of Antioch (memorial)
- 18 October** St Luke, evangelist (feast)
- 19 October** *Saints John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues*
Saint Paul of the Cross
- 22 October** *Saint John Paul II*
- 23 October** *Saint John of Capistrano*
- 24 October** *Saint Anthony Mary Claret*
- 28 October** Saints Simon and Jude (feast)



REFLECT

Henry David Thoreau famously wrote in *Walden* (a book that reflects on living in simple surroundings) that ‘The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.’ Some of us may relate to this sentiment. We may feel that things never seem to be just right in our lives. We carry disappointments; we are restless, perhaps discontented. We wonder if we will ever be truly happy. We go on the much-looked-forward-to holiday and find that our troubles have found their way into the luggage. We have the longed-for baby and find that it has changed our lives in ways that are more challenging than we expected. The much-desired job turns out to be more routine than we had hoped. And then there are the unexpected jolts brought by a health scare or the death of a loved one, which shake our meaning-making system. And all of this happens in the midst of the troubled, mysterious world in which we live.

All of this informs our lives as people of faith. Pope Francis notes that

Life is a journey, along different roads, different paths which leave their mark on us. We also know in faith that Jesus seeks us out. He wants to heal our wounds, to soothe our feet which hurt from travelling alone, to wash each of us clean of the dust from our journey. He doesn’t ask us where we have been, he doesn’t question us about what we have done. Rather, he tells us: ‘Unless I wash your feet, you have no share with me’ (Jn 13:8). Unless I wash your feet, I will not be able to give you the life which the Father always dreamed of, the life for which he created you. Jesus comes to meet us, so that he can restore our dignity as children of God. He wants to help us to set out again, to resume our journey, to recover our hope, to restore our faith and trust. He wants us to keep walking along the paths of life, to realize that we have a mission, and that confinement is never the same thing as exclusion.

—address to detainees at Curran-Fromhold
Correctional Facility, Philadelphia,
September 2015

So we journey on in this troubled, mysterious, beautiful world of ours, confident that Jesus is with us at this moment of time, urging us forward, and we are just where we are meant to be.

BECOMING A MISSIONARY DISCIPLE ...

Encounter

‘I invite Christians, everywhere, at this very moment to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do to this unfailingly each day.’

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §3

- How can I accept this invitation to encounter Jesus in my daily life of faith?

Accompany

If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realise that every person is worthy of our giving.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §274

- How will I accompany others this week?

Community

The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §24

- How will I encourage others in my community to go forth this week in a missionary spirit?

Go forth

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §127

- How will I accept the challenge of preaching the Good News in word and action this week to people and communities on the margins, locally and globally?

PRAY

Loving God,
Encourage me in my living and my loving.
Gift me with a gracious spirit,
in order that I may more readily respond to your call.
Amen.



REFLECT

Daily life can be overwhelming. There are so many issues at play in these beautiful and troubled worlds of Australia, the church and beyond. And this is before we face our personal challenges. The worries of life can crowd in on us, causing our anxiety levels to rise. We may even feel as though we are unnoticed.

When we listen to this week's gospel story, we can imagine how the lepers must have felt: like the outcasts of their society, the ones who were not seen, the ones who carried the burden of their condition. They are aware of their own needs, and something in Jesus encourages them to call out. Perhaps this is because they knew that Jesus saw them. That Jesus heard their cries. That Jesus could respond to them. Perhaps this gospel is an invitation to us to remember the close connection between invitation, faith and hope; to remember that it all starts with an encounter, and that we will all respond differently to the invitation, depending on how ready we are to meet Jesus.

In reflecting on the joy of encountering Jesus, Pope Francis notes: 'I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §7).

Perhaps this week we are invited to reflect on how we encounter others. How are we able to invite people to an encounter with God, an encounter with Jesus, through their encounter with us?

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BECOMING A MISSIONARY DISCIPLE ...

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- How will I encourage others in my community to go forth this week in a missionary spirit?

Go forth

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility.

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- How will I accept the challenge of preaching the Good News in word and action this week to people and communities on the margins, locally and globally?

PRAY

Loving God,
Encourage me in my living and my loving.
Gift me with a gracious spirit,
in order that I may more readily respond
to your call.
Amen.





REFLECT

This week we celebrate World Mission Sunday (20 October). As a reflection throughout the week, it may be helpful to ponder the message Pope Francis prepared for Mission Sunday 2019 (*see p. 5*).

Many young children have a ‘best-ever’ stage. Everything becomes ‘the best ever’—whether it be an ice cream, a film, a cricket game, a day at school, the latest meal. We may marvel at the optimism of these little spirits and hope that they will last for a while, knowing, of course, that this stage cannot last forever.

As we grow older, we realise that not every day is going to be a great day. There will be days when truly terrible things happen to us or to our family members and friends; days when we know we have not been the best we can be—a sharp word, perhaps, or a meanness of spirit that crept into the way we related to another; days when things seem grey and difficult. And there will also be days of great joy; days when we celebrate the wonder of being alive, when we look to the stars and praise the one who made the world.

And perhaps this is a little of what Jesus is teaching us this week: that no matter what is happening to us on our journey, we are encouraged to invite God into our lives through constant, persistent prayer. Pope Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium* that since ‘we do not always see [the good] seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks’ (§279). So as we focus on our call to mission during this month, we should recall Pope Francis’ observation that ‘When evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open; freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others’ (§282)

Perhaps the invitation this week is to be constant, courageous and confident in our prayer. Because we know that God is present, active and alive in our world and that God does respond—if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

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BECOMING A MISSIONARY DISCIPLE ...

Encounter

‘I invite Christians, everywhere, at this very moment to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you do to this unfailingly each day.’

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §3

- How can I accept this invitation to encounter Jesus in my daily life of faith?

Accompany

If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realise that every person is worthy of our giving.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §274

- How will I accompany others this week?

Community

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Week 4

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Our life is mission

... throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §25



POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR OCTOBER

A Missionary 'Spring' in the Church

That the breath of the Holy Spirit engender a new missionary 'spring' in the Church.

THIS WEEK

- Monday 28 October: Sts Simon and Jude (feast)

BE STILL

Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and to offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.

GATHERING PRAYER

Loving God,
Allow us to draw near to you
and to sit in your presence
as we open our hearts to respond to your word.
Amen.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else: 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

—Luke 18:9–14

The Gospel of the Lord.

ENCOUNTERING JESUS IN THE WORD

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* encourages spiritual reading as 'one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit' (§152).

We sit in the presence of God during a recollected reading of the text and we read God's word in prayer—*lectio divina*—asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. Take five minutes of silence to reflect upon how God is speaking through this text. Noting down some responses to the following questions may assist with reflection:

I think about my life

- What is God asking me to listen to?
- What does God want me to pay attention to?
- What is God prompting, directing, leading and guiding me to in this reading?

I think about my community and the world

- What is God asking of us at this time?
- What does God want us to attend to in our community or world?
- What is God prompting, directing, leading and guiding us towards?

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REFLECT

Pope Francis has identified the importance of dialogue for the ongoing development of the church. He notes that dialogue is not negotiation:

Negotiating is to try to get one's own 'slice' of the communal pie ... Discuss together, dare I say get angry together, think about the best solutions for all. Many times the encounter is involved in conflict. In dialogue conflict occurs: it is logical and predictable that it is this way. And we should not fear it or ignore it but accept it. 'Agreeing to bear the conflict, resolve it and transform it into a connecting link of a new process' (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §227).

—address to National Ecclesial Congress for the Church in Italy, Florence, 13 November 2015

Dialogue is risky because it means that solutions to challenges will need to be found together. It's not about convincing the other; it's about an invitation. It asks us to propose, not impose. It requires a generous heart and a capacity to accept that individually we do not have all the answers. It underpins a form of encounter with the other.

And just as we encounter each other, we are encouraged to encounter the person of Jesus—because the message of Jesus didn't stop at the resurrection. When we encounter Jesus, we are drawn into the church's ongoing task of thinking about what Jesus' message might look like for the world today. This encounter encourages us to think about how we can help transform the church from an 'institution' into the living presence of God in our world—a church where faith is dynamic, involving all the people of God and serving all people.

Perhaps the invitation of this week's gospel is to look with the eyes of God at the 'other' and to respond to the needs of the world with the hands of Jesus.

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“ This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God’s love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God’s love. ”

—Pope Francis, message for Mission Sunday 2019



**Extraordinary Missionary Month | October 2019
Parish Resource Booklet**

This resource has been prepared in collaboration with Catholic Mission to assist individuals and groups to enter into the Extraordinary Missionary Month.

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www.catholicmission.org.au/emm

