



October
2019

Extraordinary Missionary Month

OCTOBER 2019

This study is divided into four weeks corresponding with the four dimensions for living out the Extraordinary Missionary Month as proposed by Pope Francis.

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(314)792-7655.*

How to Use This Study

This study is designed to be adapted to your group (i.e. how often you meet, day of the week you meet, and time length). Ideally, this study would be used during the Extraordinary Missionary Month; however, it can be used before or after the month as any time of the year is an appropriate time for reflection on the missionary dimension of the Church.

Also, this study is intended for use where the internet is easily accessible, and each person has their own device as this study contains clickable links throughout the document. However, if this is not possible, the group leader can print out copies of the study, Scripture reflections or mission testimonies. All these materials can be accessed at www.archstl.org/october2019.

Opening Prayer

This is the prayer proposed by Pope Francis for the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019.

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, forever and ever.

Amen.



Week 1

In recognition of the 100th year anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, Pope Francis has convoked an Extraordinary Missionary Month dedicated to the Church's mission, in particular the mission *ad gentes* (to the nations). The theme of the month is "Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World."

This month is being planned by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) and the Pontifical Mission Societies. The CEP is tasked with directing the evangelization and missionary efforts of the Church. The Pontifical Mission Societies, contained within the CEP, are a worldwide network at the service of the Holy Father to sustain the mission and the young Churches through prayer and charity. In terms of missionary cooperation, they are to be given "pride of place, since they are the means of imbuing Catholics from their very infancy with a real universal and missionary outlook; and they are also the means of making an effective collection of funds to subsidize all missions, each according to its needs" (*Ad Gentes*, 38).

The Pontifical Mission Societies

There are four societies that make up the Pontifical Mission Societies – Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Missionary Childhood Association, Society of St. Peter the Apostle, and the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious – all born through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit under different founders. In brief, the Society of the Propagation of the Faith directs the prayer and sacrifices of the faithful towards missionary work around the world. The Missionary Childhood Association encourages children to pray and sacrifice for other children around the world, particularly those in mission countries. The Society of St. Peter the Apostle raises support for priests and religious in formation in mission countries, and finally, the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious encourages priests and religious in their missionary call.

While the different societies all grew out of the local Church, they became designated for the universal Church when given their "pontifical" status. The first three societies listed above became pontifical in 1922, and the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious joined them in 1956. In St. Louis, the Mission Office directs the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies throughout the archdiocese.



The Four Dimensions Proposed by Pope Francis for Living the Extraordinary Missionary Month:

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in his Church: in the Eucharist, in the Word of God, and in personal and communal prayer
2. Testimony: missionary saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith as an expression of the Church scattered throughout the world
3. Missionary formation: biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological
4. Missionary charity

Discuss

- The year 2016 was the last time Pope Francis declared an “extraordinary” time for the Church through the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. How might the Extraordinary Missionary Month be a special time for the Church? How do you think about the Church’s call to missionary discipleship?

1st Dimension: Encountering Jesus Christ

We encounter Jesus Christ living in His Church through the Eucharist, Word of God, and in personal and communal prayer. As Pope St. Paul VI said in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself...In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel” (15). We begin our preparation for the Extraordinary Missionary Month where we must begin all that we do in the Church – with Jesus Christ. Only through having a personal relationship with Jesus - spending time with Him in the sacraments, Scripture, community and talking with Him one-on-one, can we truly know His heart and how to share His Gospel with everyone.

Now, read the Daily Readings which can be found by going to www.usccb.org. (If you are doing this study outside of October, my recommendation would be to use the readings for October 20th, 2019 which is World Mission Sunday.)

Discuss

- What struck you as you were listening to or reading the Scripture readings? A particular phrase or word resonate with you? What do you think God is saying to you through His Word?



Read

Now, read the reflection prepared by the CEP and Pontifical Mission Societies that corresponds to the day's readings.

October 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st

Discuss

- What struck you as you were listening to or reading the reflection? A particular phrase or word resonate with you?
- The Church is “missionary by her very nature” (*Ad Gentes*, 2). How do you feel that God is inviting the Church to live out this call at this particular moment in time?
- By our baptism, each one of us participates in the “threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King” (*Christifideles Laici*, 14). How do you think God is inviting you to live out your missionary call?

Close in Prayer



Week 2

2nd Dimension: Mission Testimonies

“Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church,” Pope Francis says in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (9). When the members of the Body of Christ live an authentic Christian life, they help build up the kingdom of God (CCC, 2044-2045). We are provided with the testimonies of missionary saints, martyrs, and witnesses to the faith to draw us ever deeper in our relationship with God and strengthen our own proclamation of the Gospel.

Now, each person will pick a different testimony to read (silently) by clicking on the name. These testimonies have been prepared by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) and Pontifical Mission Societies for this Extraordinary Missionary Month. A short synopsis has been provided about each witness.

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

A Carmelite nun who offered prayers and sacrifices for the salvation of all, leading to her being given the title of patroness of missions and missionaries.

St. Francis Xavier

The patron of missions, who has also been referred to as the Apostle of India and Japan.

St. Francis of Assisi

The son of a wealthy merchant who renounced his wealth for preaching the kingdom of God.

Blessed Paolo Manna

The Founder of the Pontifical Missionary Union, a union to set clergy and religious on fire with the mission of the Church so that this fire could be transferred to the whole Church.

Venerable Pauline Jaricot

The Founder of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a group devoted to praying and sacrificing for the missions around the world.



Charles de Forbin-Janson

The Founder of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood (or Missionary Childhood – as it is known in the U.S.), a society for children to pray and sacrifice for children in the missions.

Jeanne Bigard

Founder of the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle which supports the formation of priests and religious in missions.

Anna Dengel

A doctor who worked to bring change to canon law that religious sisters could practice medicine, forming the Medical Mission Sisters who trained St. Teresa of Calcutta.

Blessed Benedict Daswa

A husband, father, teacher, catechist and martyr who killed for his refusal to collaborate in consulting a sorcerer.

Caterina Zecchini

The Founder of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a community devoted to the universal mission of the Church.

Blessed Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi

The first blessed of Nigeria, first indigenous vocation of the area, priest, who helped prepare the way for monastic life in the region.

Venerable Délia Tétréault

The Founder of the first female missionary institute in Canada, fueling missionary fervor both in Canada and around the world.

Servant of God Ezechiele Ramin

Italian Comboni Missionary to Brazil martyred for empathizing with the suffering indigenous farmers.

Servant of God Felice Tantardini

A lay missionary of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions in Burma.

Jean Cassigne

A missionary of the Foreign Missions of Paris sent to Vietnam where he served among the lepers.



Blessed Justus Ukon

A Japanese layman, politician, soldier, feudal lord and samurai who renounced his social status for the Gospel.

Blessed Lucien Botvasoa

A husband, father, teacher, catechist, Secular Franciscan in Madagascar, who was martyred for refusing to be a part of the corrupt political parties.

Mon Filomena Yamamoto

A Japanese Xaverian Missionary of Mary who strived to give her life to the mercy of God.

Blessed Peter To Rot

The first blessed of Papua New Guinea. A husband, father, and catechist who was killed by Japanese soldiers in 1945 for his defense of Christian marriage.

Blessed Pierre Claviere

Bishop of Oran in Algeria; he fostered relationships with Muslims in the country, creating bonds of trust and friendship, and was martyred for the Church in 1996.

Simon Mpecke

Was among the first of the indigenous of Cameroon to become a priest, he became a missionary priest to northern Cameroon.

Blessed Titus Brandsma

Carmelite priest, journalist, and university professor in the Netherlands who was openly vocal in his opposition to the Nazis, was arrested and killed at Dachau concentration camp.

Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo

A lady of the court in Madagascar who practiced Catholicism despite the stigma surrounding the faith in her social status.

Vivian Uchechi Ogu

A witness to the faith in Nigeria who shared her love of Jesus especially through her parish choir and as president of her parish's Holy Childhood chapter; she was killed at the age of 14, for refusing to allow her kidnappers to rape her.



Wanda Błęńska

A doctor and lay missionary from Poland who spent much of her life caring for lepers in Uganda, in addition to teaching others about the missionary life of the Church through various missionary organizations and academic circles.

Discuss

- Share with the group which testimony you read and tell a little about the person's life. What amazed you in reading the testimony of this person?
- In his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis says to each one of us,

“May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.” (24)

How is the Lord shaping the “word” He wants to speak to the world by your life?

- What are some ways that you can be open to the Lord's grace and workings in your life?
- What are some obstacles you are currently facing in your personal mission? How can you turn to the Lord with these obstacles?

Close in Prayer



Week 3

3rd Dimension: Missionary Formation

What are the biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological foundations for the mission of the Church? To provide this reflection, we have compiled a sampling of different thoughts from the teachings of the Church on this topic.

Catholicity

“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.” Mt 28:19-20

“The word ‘catholic’ means ‘universal,’ in the sense of ‘according to the totality’ or ‘in keeping with the whole.’ The Church is catholic in a double sense: First, the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her...Secondly, the Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.” (CCC 830-831)

"Zeal for missionary activity and the Catholic spirit are one and the same. A principal note of the Church is catholicity; consequently, a man is no true member of the Church unless he is likewise a true member of the entire body of Christian believers and is filled with an ardent desire to see her take root and flourish in every land." Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Fidei Donum*, 44 (1957)

“All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the decree of God's will may be fulfilled. In the beginning God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one...This characteristic of universality which adorns the people of God is a gift from the Lord Himself. By reason of it, the Catholic Church strives constantly and with due effect to bring all humanity and all its possessions back to its source In Christ, with Him as its head and united in His Spirit.” Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 13 (1964)

“In the course of twenty centuries of history, the generations of Christians have periodically faced various obstacles to this universal mission. On the one hand, on the part of the evangelizers themselves, there has been the temptation for various reasons to narrow down the field of their missionary activity. On the other hand, there has been the often humanly insurmountable resistance of the



people being addressed by the evangelizer... Despite such adversities, the Church constantly renews her deepest inspiration, that which comes to her directly from the Lord: To the whole world! To all creation! Right to the ends of the earth!" St. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 50 (1975)

Discuss

- Which quote resonated the most with you? What struck you about it?
- How do these quotes shape your understanding of the "catholic" dimension of the Church?

The Work of the Holy Spirit

"But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim." Acts 2:1-4

"The origin and purpose of mission. The Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: 'The Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.' The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love." (CCC 850)

"The Holy Spirit is indeed the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission." St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, 21 (1990)

Discuss

- Which quote resonated the most with you? What struck you about it?
- It was not until the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles at Pentecost that they left the upper room and began preaching the Gospel. How can you open yourself to the workings of the Holy Spirit to more boldly proclaim the Gospel?



Our Baptismal Responsibility

“Consequently, the Church’s mission cannot be considered as an optional or supplementary element in her life. Rather it entails letting the Holy Spirit assimilate us to Christ himself, and thus to share in his own mission: ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you’ (*Jn 20:21*) to share the word with your entire life.” Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*, 93 (2010)

“Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” Romans 6:3-4

“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’” (CCC 1213)

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. *Mt 28:19*)... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120 (2013)

Discuss

- Which quote resonated the most with you? What struck you about it?
- How would you describe in your own words the responsibility entrusted to you through your baptism? What does your baptism mean to you?

Prayer and Sacrifice

“Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” Matthew 10:8

“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need.” Acts 2:44-45

“Remember that your duty is not the extension of a human realm, but of Christ’s; and remember too that your goal is the acquisition of citizens for a heavenly-fatherland, and not for an earthly one.” Pope Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, 18 (1919)



“Everyone can pray, of this fact there can be no question. Everyone, therefore, has at hand and can make use of this all-important help, this daily nourishment of the missions.” Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 8 (1926)

“If you deprive yourself of a co-laborer and sharer of your toils, the Divine Founder of the Church will surely supply every such deficiency by showering more abundant blessings on your diocese and by bringing into existence more and more new vocations to the sacred ministry.” Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 11 (1926)

“From the beginning holy Church by her very nature has been compelled to spread the Word of God everywhere, and in fulfilling this obligation to which she knows not how to be unfaithful she has never ceased to ask for a threefold assistance from her children: namely, prayers, material aid, and, in some cases, the gift of themselves.” Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Fidei Donum*, 48 (1957)

“We exhort all the bishops, the clergy, and the faithful of the dioceses of the whole world, who are contributing to relieve the spiritual and material necessities of the missions by their prayers and offerings, to increase voluntarily their badly needed contributions. Despite the scarcity of priests which besets even the pastors of the oldest dioceses, there should be no hesitation in encouraging missionary vocations and in releasing the very best and most useful laymen, that they may be placed at the disposal of the new dioceses; heavenly consolations will soon be derived from this sacrifice, made for the furtherance of God's cause.” St. John XXIII, Encyclical *Princeps Pastorum*, 56 (1959)

“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.” St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, 34 (1990)

Discuss

- Which quote resonated the most with you? What struck you about it?
- From the beginning of the Church, we learn of Christians supporting their brothers and sisters in Christ through prayer and sacrifice. What are the ways you support your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Close in Prayer



Week 4

4th Dimension: Missionary Charity

Prayer

Hopefully, over these last four weeks, you have been growing in your personal relationship with Christ, learning from the testimonies of missionary saints and witnesses to the faith and deepening your theology of mission. Now, we come to the last topic of this study: missionary charity. Missionary charity constitutes the tangible, concrete steps to how we live out our missionary call, loving our brothers and sisters around the world. So, what do we do with what we have learned? How do we support the missionary action of the Church, in particular the mission *ad gentes* (to the nations)?

To answer this question, I'd like to repeat one of the quotes we looked at last week: "From the beginning holy Church by her very nature has been compelled to spread the Word of God everywhere, and in fulfilling this obligation to which she knows not how to be unfaithful she has never ceased to ask for a threefold assistance from her children: namely, prayers, material aid, and, in some cases, the gift of themselves." Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Fidei Donum*, 48 (1957)

In the study for tonight, we will discuss this threefold assistance of prayers, material aid, and the gift of self, and first, I would like to speak on this topic of prayer as it is the most important action we can do to support the mission of the Church. Most likely, you recognize the importance of prayer but maybe still do not find this answer to be satisfying. When I am talking to people about the mission of the Church, and I encourage them in their prayer, often their response is along the lines of, "But, I want to *do* something. What can I do?" I understand where this is coming from. My question to that is, "When did prayer no longer mean 'doing' something -- or doing enough?"

Prayer is an action, and it is powerful - have we forgotten that? The strength of interceding for others? In his *Message for World Mission Day 2007*, Pope Benedict XVI addressed this and said, "However, let it not be forgotten that the first and priority contribution that we are called to offer to the missionary action of the Church is prayer."

Being completely honest with yourself, how often do you think to intentionally pray for missionaries - those who are embracing a new people, way of life, culture, etc. - all to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ? Or how often do



you pray for those who have never heard the name of Jesus or those who have heard the name of Jesus but still do not believe?

Now, I'm not saying this is an easy task (I mean, I work for the Mission Office, and I still struggle with this!). Intercession is tough. Even the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "The principal difficulty concerns the *prayer of petition*, for oneself or for others in intercession" (2734). Despite this difficulty, we are reminded throughout Scripture to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17) and to persevere in prayer (Eph 6:18). Jesus tells us, "Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete" (Jn 16:23-24).

Furthermore, we are given a great example of the importance of prayer through the little flower, St. Thérèse of Lisieux. St. Thérèse of Lisieux is the patroness of missions and missionaries, her who *never* left the convent. She desired to be a missionary in another country but her health prevented her from doing so. Instead, she fervently prayed and sacrificed for missionaries and the spread of the Gospel around the world. Through her prayers and sacrifices, she was truly united in the mission *ad gentes* of the Church. How powerful that the Church would give her the title of patroness, with St. Francis Xavier her counterpart as patron – him who has often been referred to as the greatest missionary since the Apostles! Let us listen to what the Church is saying through this.

Now, I am not negating other forms of "action." We are called to act. However, we cannot do anything without rooting it in prayer first. Only through prayer do we discover how the *Lord* desires of us to act and how *He* is calling us to serve.

The reality is, most of us will not be called to be a missionary in another country. However, the beauty of prayer is that no matter our vocation, where we live, what we do, we can all participate in the Church's mission *ad gentes* through prayer.

Let us be bold in our prayer. May we grow in our faith that we believe our prayers have power.

Discuss

- How would you like to be more intentional in your prayer for the missionary activity of the Church?
- What concrete steps can you take so that this prayer becomes a reality and part of your daily routine? How might your small group assist you in this?



Material Aid

Missionaries leave their home, family, and friends, often sacrificing their comforts to spread the Gospel. You too can join in the sacrifices of missionaries and offer them up for the salvation of souls. One way to do this is to fast from a particular food or drink, or you could give up an activity you enjoy and offer that up.

From there, you can connect your “giving up” to support the material aid of missions, as the material aid we give is strengthened by the fasting we do. In his book, ‘*You Did It to Me*,’ Fr. Michael Gaitley says, “In true almsgiving, there’s a direct correlation between what we give up and what we give” (119). While it may be challenging to always tie our giving to our fasting or giving up, Fr. Gaitley does offer a suggestion to help create this mindfulness:

- Set up a “Mercy Fund.” The idea of a “Mercy Fund” is a way to give from your poverty, rather than your surplus. You keep a bank at home or an account at your bank. Every time you make sacrifices, you put that money in your Mercy Fund. However, if you’re like me and you rarely have physical cash, it’s a little more difficult than just putting money in a piggy bank. I’d recommend using some sort of tracking device like the “Purchase Tracker” app to keep track of sacrifices which you can then transfer at the end of the month, or whenever you’d like to (if you have suggestions for a better way of doing this in our digital age, please reach out to me as I am always seeking those out!). And, a note with regards to tithing, according to Sacred Scripture, the suggested minimum that we tithe is 10%, with 5% to the parish and the other 5% to support works of mercy (‘*You Did It to Me*,’ 128).

Once you have sacrificed, where can you give your material aid to support the missionary work of the Church? Check out some options below!

- **Society for the Propagation of the Faith** - directs the prayer and sacrifices of the faithful towards missionary work around the world.
 - World Mission Sunday – collection taken every year on the second to last Sunday of October in your parish to support the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. (Fun fact: St. John Paul II was installed as pope on World Mission Sunday 1978. He makes reference to it in his *Message for World Mission Sunday 1979* which can be read [here](#))
 - Become a **Daily Worldmissionaire** (local to St. Louis) - someone who supports the Society for the Propagation of the Faith by committing to **pray and sacrifice daily** for missions and



missionaries around the world. As you can see, the idea behind the Daily Worldmissionaire is of a similar philosophy as the Mercy Fund.

- Mass Requests – Have a missionary priest celebrate Masses for your intentions.
- Missionary Plan of Cooperation – Every summer, parishes throughout the archdiocese invite missionaries to make appeals. Donations made through your parish.
- **Missionary Childhood Association** – Supports children spiritually and physically in mission countries.
- **Society of St. Peter the Apostle** – Supports priests and religious in formation in mission countries.
- **Latin America Apostolate** (local to St. Louis) – Supports the mission of St. Louis priests in La Paz, Bolivia.

As mentioned in week one, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Missionary Childhood Association and Society of St. Peter the Apostle are part of the Pontifical Mission Societies, those given “pride of place” in the spiritual and material assistance to the missions (*Ad Gentes*, 38).

“Sometimes it seems that our work is fruitless, but mission is not like a business transaction or investment, or even a humanitarian activity. It is not a show where we count how many people come as a result of our publicity; it is something much deeper, which escapes all measurement. It may be that the Lord uses our sacrifices to shower blessings in another part of the world which we will never visit. The Holy Spirit works as he wills, when he wills and where he wills; we entrust ourselves without pretending to see striking results. We know only that our commitment is necessary.” Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 279

Discuss

- How would you like to be more intentional in your sacrifice for the missionary activity of the Church?
- What concrete steps can you take so that this sacrifice becomes a reality and part of your routine? How might your small group assist you in this?
- What will help you to maintain a mindfulness in your giving?



Gift of Self

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus says, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (10:2). While most of us are called to support the Church through prayer and sacrifice, some are called to give their whole self through being a missionary.

Maybe, over these past few weeks of study or at some other point in your life, you have felt called to be a missionary. Outside of religious life, it can sometimes be difficult for lay people to **serve as a missionary**. If you feel that the Lord might be calling you to the missionary life, one recommendation is to check out Family Missions Company at <https://www.familymissionscompany.com/>. They are a Catholic organization for individuals or families to serve as missionaries, either on a long-term or short-term basis.

Additionally, the Mission Office offers short-term mission trips to the Latin America Apostolate in Bolivia. Currently, the office is in the process of organizing a group for January 2020.

Discuss

- Have you ever had the opportunity to serve as a missionary on a long-term or short-term basis? What was that experience like? If not, have you ever felt God might be calling you to that possibility?
- Even if we are not called to go to another country, we are all called to be missionary disciples through our baptism (reference back to week three if you need a refresher). How might you be a missionary disciple right here in St. Louis?

Close in Prayer