

Extraordinary Missionary Month

OCTOBER 2019

Life Night

The Pontifical Mission Societies

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Overview

Goal

For teens to grow in their identity as a missionary disciple and their understanding of the mission they have received from Christ.

About this Life Night

This life night is designed to be used during the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019, 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.

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– 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 encourages priests and religious in their missionary call, as well as strengthens committed laypeople for the mission.



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 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 October 2019:

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

GATHER

Welcome and Introductions (5 min.)

Gather the teens into the main meeting space. Welcome them to the Life Night and begin in prayer.

Icebreaker Activity:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKO7IAUqeGQ&list=PLo5gJmnUbu7Zmn4ZH8fEiGmoOlxTlldrA&index=28>

Being a missionary can be awkward and weird at times. However, it opens up each of us and others to the greatest joy of Jesus!

PROCLAIM

Mission Teaching (15 min.)

Since 1926 when Pope Pius XI first established World Mission Sunday, the Church has celebrated World Mission Sunday on the second to last Sunday of October. Because of that, October is considered mission month. However, this year will not be an ordinary mission month. Pope Francis has declared this October 2019 to be an *Extraordinary Missionary Month* for the Church. What does that mean? Essentially, it is a special time for the universal Church to focus on this aspect of the Church. Church documents continually reaffirm that the Church is “missionary by her very nature” (*Ad Gentes*, 2). Pope Francis has



given the theme “Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World” and four ways to celebrate 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
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Tonight, we will incorporate each of these four dimensions.

3 Minute Testimony/Personal Story:

Share a way that you have experienced one of the four dimensions – how has your life has been affected by a personal encounter with Jesus, the Eucharist, Scripture, the Saints, or missionary charity, etc.? Avoid sharing how “other” people have been affected – share your personal experience.

BREAK

Talk with Jesus (15 min.)

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.

First, we are going to be spend time with His Word and in His Presence.

Distribute copies of the 2nd reading for October 20th, 2019 (World Mission Sunday) for each person to read silently. (For the sake of time, just look at one of the Scripture passages for the day and if you prefer, you can use the 1st reading, responsorial psalm, or Gospel instead). Pass out pens/highlighters for underlining/highlighting things that stood out to them or parts that they had questions about.

Or, you could introduce the teens to *Lectio Divina*, guiding them through the reading. Check out this [reference!](#)



Ideally, take the teens before the Blessed Sacrament, whether through Eucharistic adoration or before the tabernacle. Before beginning this prayer time, encourage the teens to use the words of Scripture to guide their conversation. Remind them to talk to Jesus as they would with their friends.

Reading 2

2 TM 3:14-4:2

Beloved:

Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

Small Group Discussion (20 min.)

Take the necessary time to divide into small groups. The Core Member opens in prayer and leads the small group discussion related to the teens' time in prayer and reflection with Scripture.

Questions:

- 1) What struck you from your time of personal prayer with Jesus? Would you like to share anything from your conversation together?
- 2) What phrases or words resonated with you from the Scripture readings?
- 3) What is one challenge you would like to incorporate into this week – how will you live out missionary charity in your school, home, and life?



Missionary Witnesses (30 min.)

Now, we will take some time to focus on this second point, learning from missionary saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith. Below is a list of witnesses that was compiled by the Vatican's CEP and Pontifical Mission Societies. A brief description is provided about the person. Each group will learn about a witness to the faith and then present to the large group about them. Ideally, the small groups would use the internet to research about these people. If that is not possible or you do not allow cell phones to be used during youth group, print out the biographies of the saints, martyrs or witnesses (by clicking on their name) and give that to the small group that selects them. In that case, small groups can take turns reading the biography.

To make the selection process go quicker, the YM will narrow down to 8 missionaries beforehand. Then, have each group draw the name of a missionary from a bowl. Each group should be given a designated box of props that they use for the skit. After they draw the name of the missionary and collect their prop box, they have to go to another bowl that has a variety of "themes" for the skit – Western, Broadway show, YouTube vlog, mockumentary (ex. The Office), nature documentary, etc. – they will draw for their theme. When they have their missionary and theme selected – they will be instructed to make a skit (under 3 minutes) in the theme they selected.

After all of the skits, the YM will vote (by round of applause or by Core Team vote) who had the best skit – best skit group wins a prize (bag of candy, first in line for dinner next week – be creative!)

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 Tétrault

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 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.

Share Presentations (25 min.)

Small groups will take turns sharing their skits.

Large Group Discussion (10 min.)

Once every group has presented, share with the teens that just as they learned through the various saints and witnesses to the faith, through their baptism they too are being called to the same missionary life right here in St. Louis. Share ideas with the teens some ways they can do so:

- Include missions and missionaries in your prayer intentions
- Invite a friend to youth group
- Offer to pray with a family or friend who's going through a challenging time
- Make sacrifices (not just for Lent), i.e. give up getting a snack from QT and donate that money to those in need
- Start a collection at youth group for missions and missionaries

After giving some ideas, invite the teens to add to this list and share what concrete ways they feel called to live this out. (For teens who are interested in learning more about what Scripture and Tradition say regarding this, they can take the handout at the end of the document).

SEND

Close in praying the prayer proposed by Pope Francis for the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019:



If you would like free prayer cards for your group, please contact the Mission Office at (314) 792-7664 or email kimbecvar@archstl.org

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.



Missionary Formation

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)



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)

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)

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)