In the season of Advent, we await with eager expectation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. During this special time, the Church gifts each one of us with the opportunity to reflect on our need for Jesus in our lives. We can ask ourselves questions, such as the following, to guide our preparation: what is my relationship with Jesus at present? How has my relationship changed with Jesus during this last year? Has it grown deeper, remained about the same, or become more distant? How can I open up my heart to Jesus in a new way this Advent? Am I grateful for the gift of faith in Jesus in my life? Hopefully, by taking time to reflect on these and other questions, we will grow in our anticipation of Jesus’ coming at Christmas.

After thinking about these questions, it naturally leads to the next question, how much do I desire for the whole world to know Jesus and be transformed by His love? Not only are we called to prepare for Jesus’ coming, but we are also called to help others in their preparation. One way we can do this is through our prayer for missionaries and those they serve. Let us pray with a renewed fervor this Advent for people all over the world who do not yet believe in Jesus to receive Him this Christmas. St. Paul says to us in his letter to the Romans, “We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now” (8:22). Enter into this Scripture passage and experience the labor pains of creation yearning for its Savior. As we are praying to know Jesus in a deeper way this Advent, what a perfect opportunity to pray for those who do not yet know Him. Not only can we offer our prayers, but we can also offer the sacrifices we make during this Advent season. During Advent, the Church encourages us to do acts of kindness and sacrifice for others. Through our prayers and sacrifices, we can help prepare our hearts as well as other peoples’ hearts to receive Jesus this Christmas.

To aid us in our prayer and sacrifice, we can bring to mind specific groups of people around the world in need of Jesus. In praying for the Americas, we can lift up the people of Bolivia and the social unrest they are experiencing. For Africa, we can remember the 14 people murdered at a Christian church in Burkina Faso on Dec. 1st. For Asia, we can pray and sacrifice for the efforts of interreligious dialogue occurring in Indonesia among government and religious leaders. For those in Europe, we can offer up our prayers and sacrifices for the children Starsingers of Switzerland, who as part of the Missionary Childhood Association sing and bring the good news of the Gospel around the country. For Oceania, we can pray and sacrifice for all those affected by the drought in Australia.

This Advent, let us offer our prayers and sacrifices that all may come to believe in Christ and rejoice at His coming!
Missionary Finalist for The Opus Prize

Brother Charles Nuwagaba, a participant in the Missionary Plan of Cooperation in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, awarded $100,000 for his mission work.

As Provincial Vicar of the Bannakaroli Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga, Brother Charles Nuwagaba is responsible for elementary and vocational programs in the Kibera slum. Located near Nairobi, Kenya, the Kibera slum is the largest slum in Africa. The Bannakaroli Brothers also serve in Uganda and Tanzania, primarily working in education and evangelization, but also in health care, as needed, for the sake of their students. Currently, the Brothers administer 21 primary, 7 secondary, and 10 vocational schools, as well as 2 orphanages.

This summer, Brother Charles traveled to the Archdiocese of St. Louis to make mission appeals on behalf of the Bannakaroli Brothers at both Immaculate Conception in Maplewood and at St. Luke the Evangelist. He was nominated by several St. Louisans for The Opus Prize, which was presented this year at St. Louis University. As a finalist, Brother Charles received $100,000 for his outstanding work in his community. Please join us in congratulating Brother Charles Nuwagaba!

Since the establishment of our archdiocesan mission, the Latin America Apostolate, in Bolivia in 1956, many St. Louis priests have been acquainted with living under military dictatorships—and standing up for the oppressed in spite of the consequences. For example, the late Msgr. David Ratzmann was an outspoken defender of the rights of the indigenous people and was treated violently when imprisoned. The military-led Bishop Morgan Carey knew that they were not thrilled with his burning of a military uniform in defiance of the oppression, and more than one of the Sisters of the Precious Blood had to go into hiding to avoid being killed for raising awareness of the atrocities being committed.

In light of this, the turmoil currently engulfing Bolivia perhaps seems a bit tame, but it is no less significant.

Elected in 2005, the now ex-President Evo Morales Ayma and his party Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS or Movement Toward Socialism) inaugurated a new constitution in 2009. Although the new constitution specified five-year terms with a two-term limit, after his 2009 reelection he was also reelected in 2014. Many cried foul before the 2014 election, but his defense was that his first term did not count since it was under the defunct Republic of Bolivia, not the new Multi-National State of Bolivia. When he expressed his determination to run again in 2019, he called a national referendum. To his dismay, the majority declared that he should not be allowed to run another term. In spite of the referendum, his party machinery cleared him to stand for the national election on October 20, 2019. He supposedly won, but the election was fraught with irregularities as decreed by international organizations and Bolivians alike. Amid ongoing protests from Bolivians denouncing the fraud, confronted with the mutiny of the police, and the suggestion from the military that he renounce the presidency, he did just that and fled to Mexico where he was granted political asylum. Similarly, his ministers fled the country or sought refuge in embassies.

While thousands took to the streets to celebrate the return of democracy, others who remained loyal to MAS began chaos by ransacking stores and harassing revelers. Once an interim president was announced, crowds loyal to the now ex-President began causing chaos by ransacking stores and harassing revelers. Once an interim president was announced, crowds loyal to the now ex-President began causing chaos by ransacking stores and harassing revelers.

Your Legacy to the World: The Gospel

It’s never too late to share the Gospel, and your legacy gift enables missionaries around the world to do just that! If you already have a will, a quick phone call to your attorney is all you’ll need to add a charitable gift.

Call us today at (314) 792-7655 for more information.

Mission Programs

The faithful of the archdiocese are blessed with several opportunities to answer their baptismal call to be “missionary disciples” and participate in the missionary activity of the church through the following programs:

World Mission Sunday
The Daily Worldmissionaries
Society of St. Peter the Apostle
Missionary Childhood Association
Missionary Plan of Cooperation
Latin America Apostolate
Pan y Amor

For more information on these programs, please visit www.archstl.org/missions.

Witness & Proclaim

QUARTERLY MISSION CHALLENGE TO LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH:
Once a week, read about the Church in another part of the world. Check out www.FIDES.ORG/EN for mission news and statistics.

Agenzia Fides is the information service of the Pontifical Mission Societies since 1927. Here you can find articles by continent, sign up for email updates, or check out the Fides Channel on YouTube.

Please continue to pray for missionaries around the world!

Prayers for Peace & Our Priests in Bolivia

In its almost 200 years since gaining independence from Spain, Bolivia has had almost 100 presidents. A mix of military dictatorships and democratically elected governments have ruled the landlocked South American nation, and the current times are a chilling reminder of Bolivia’s not so peaceful past.

Witness & Proclaim

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Please continue to pray for missionaries around the world!
“Christianity is not a moralism that is grafted in some way onto an already existent human being; it is the proclamation of a message in which humanity rediscovers what it has been seeking and continues to long for.”

Archbishop Dal Tosa
President of the Pontifical Mission Societies