



Missionary Prayer Intention - "So that the celebration of World Mission Day may increase in the People of God the passion for evangelism and support to the missionary activity through prayer and economic aid to the poorest Churches" - Comment on the Missionary Intention for October 2011

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Every year the Church celebrates World Mission Day. It is a day destined to revive in all the faithful, even the pastors, the awareness that the Church is by her very nature missionary, because of Christ's will. You cannot be authentically Christian and not be missionaries, not have the apostolic zeal, the desire to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to men. We can state unequivocally that the missionary zeal of a community or a local church, is a sign of its spiritual vitality. At the same time, evangelization is the best way to strengthen faith. As indicated by the Blessed Pope John Paul II, faith is strengthened when it is given to others (cf. RM, 2). The theme of World Mission Day this year, Sunday, October 23, 2011, is: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20, 21). The missionary dimension of the Church is sending an extension of Christ on behalf of the Father. The Church, as her mystical Body, extends the incarnation of Christ, his physical presence among men. Every Christian becomes, through Baptism, the mouth of Christ to proclaim his kingdom among men. The Pope recalls that the liturgy of the Church, especially of the Eucharist, is always a call from the world and a new missionary mandate in the world. Like the disciples of Emmaus, the faithful who had a real encounter with Christ, feel compelled to announce it immediately to all men. The nearness of the Lord, who stays to share the bread with them, means that the two disciples become apostles who feel the urgent need to announce to everyone that Jesus Christ is alive. The authentic participation in the liturgy always brings fruit in a missionary spirit. Benedict XVI said in his message for World Mission Day 2011, that "the proclamation of the Gospel is intended for all peoples" and reiterated that the mission entrusted by Christ to his Church is still very far from completion. "We cannot reconcile ourselves to the thought that after two thousand years there are still people who do not know Christ and have never heard his Message of salvation. And this is not all, an increasing number of people, although they have received the Gospel proclamation, have forgotten or abandoned it and no longer recognize that they belong to the Church; and in many contemporary contexts, even in traditionally Christian societies, people are averse to opening themselves to the word of faith. A cultural change nourished by globalization, by currents of thought and by the prevalent relativism is taking place, which leads to a change in a mindset and lifestyle that ignore the Gospel message, as though God did not exist, and exalt the quest for well-being, easy earnings, a career and success as life's purpose, even to the detriment of moral values" (Message for World Mission Sunday 2011).

This situation calls for a renewed passion for the evangelization of all the faithful. Every baptized person must feel this mission as their own, and support through prayer and financial help, the service of our missionaries so as to make men know the saving love of God, especially in the poorest Churches and those with little financial resources. The intercession of Mary, Star of Evangelization, brings to fruition the desire of the Holy Father: "May Mission Day revive in each one the desire and joy of 'going' to meet humanity, bringing Christ to all". (ib) (Agenzia Fides 30/09/2011)