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VATICAN - October - a month full of missionary events

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - The Feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus (1873-1897), proclaimed Patroness of the Missions in 1927 with St. Francis Xavier, marks on October 1st the beginning of Missionary October, which ends with the celebration of World Mission Day, the third Sunday of the month, on October 21. In some countries the Day is postponed to another Sunday for pastoral reasons. All over the world the Catholic Church celebrates October as the Month of the Missions, using the many benefits that the National Board of the Pontifical Mission Societies prepare to recall the duty of every baptized person to cooperate in the Church's universal mission with prayer and financial support. October was chosen as the missionary month to commemorate the discovery of the American continent, which opened a new page in the history of evangelization.
The month of October 2012 is enhanced by some ecclesiastical events particularly related to the missionary theme. On Sunday, 7 October, the Holy Father Benedict XVI will open in St. Peter the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops dedictated to "The New Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith." On the same occasion he will proclaim Saint John of Avila and St. Hildegard of Bingen "Doctors of the Church". As written in the Preface of the Instrumentum laboris of the Synod, "we must look for new methods and new forms of expression to convey to modern man the perennial truth of Jesus Christ, always new, the source of all news ... The renewed dynamism of the Christian communities will give a new impetus to missionary activity (missio ad gentes), urgent today more than ever, given the large number of people who do not know Jesus Christ not only in distant lands, but also in traditionally Christian countries."
Thursday, October 11 the Year of Faith will begin, on the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. The Holy Father in his Motu Proprio "Porta fidei" highlights that "Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: in every age He convokes the Church entrusting her the proclamation of the Gospel, by a mandate that is ever new. Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy in believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith. In rediscovering his love day by day, the missionary commitment of believers attains force and vigour that can never fade away" (n.7).
On the occasion of the Year of Faith, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Mission Societies launch a worldwide campaign of prayer that, through the prayer of the Holy Rosary, supports the work of evangelization in the world and the rediscovery and the deepening of faith on behalf of the baptized.
On Sunday, October 21 we will celebrate World Mission Day. "Even today, the mission ad gentes must be the constant horizon and paradigm of every ecclesial activity, because the identity of the Church herself is constituted by faith in the mystery of God who revealed himself in Christ to bring us salvation, and by the mission to bear witness and proclaim it to the world, until his return." (Benedict XVI, Message for World Mission Sunday 2012).
During Mission Day, the Pope will proceed with the canonization of 6 Blessed, martyrs and confessors of the faith, including some missionaries: Jacques Barthieu, a Jesuit priest, martyred missionary in Madagascar (1896); Peter Calungsod, a lay catechist, martyred in the Philippines (1672); Mother Marianne (Barbara Cope) witness of the faith in the leper colony of Molokai (1918). (SL) (Agenzia Fides 29/09/2012)

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