



Missionary Prayer Intention - The Pope's prayer intention August 2006: "That the Christian faithful may be aware of their special vocation everywhere and at all times" Comment by Sr Elisabetta Adamiak, superior general of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Peter Claver (SSPC)

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - The Church, in fact, lives in the world, even if she is not of the world (cf. Jn 17:16). She is sent to continue the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which by its very nature concerns the salvation of humanity, and also involves the renewal of the whole temporal order. Therefore the world, destined for the glorification of God the Father in Christ, is the environment and the means of the Christian calling of the lay faithful who, by virtue of baptism, share responsibility for the Church's mission (Cfr. *Christifideles laici* 15). Obeying the call to holiness and the apostolate the Christian faithful are called to contribute towards the sanctification of the world above all with the witness of the life making Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity, illuminating and ordering temporal realities according to God. They serve society living the Gospel radically and evangelising cultures. In social and political activity they seek to promote human dignity putting the human person at the centre of economic-social life; they work to defend the inviolable rights to life, freedom of conscience and freedom of belief. The first space for their social commitment is the family and the soul of their apostolate is charity (Cfr. LG 31).

The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI defines with mastery the fundamental choice of the life of every Christian and the reasons for apostolic commitment in "a kind of summary of the Christian life: "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us"." (1 Jn 4,16) (Cf. Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* n. 1). In fact those who recognise and believe in God's love for all men and women and who feel filled with this love, feel also compelled to share it with others, in other words they live their membership in the Church-Mission.

However since the word love is one of the most used and abused it is not surprising that even for Christians - and even the most committed - it is difficult to believe that God loves us, indeed that He loved mankind first; and this explains, at least partly, waning awareness of the greatness of the Christian vocation.

How can this awareness be revived? We find a suggestion in the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: "It is time to reaffirm the importance of prayer in the face of the activism and the growing secularism of many Christians engaged in charitable work" (n. 37). Therefore all the members of the Church - ordained ministers, consecrated persons, the laity - must focus on prayer, striving to become ever more familiar with God, leaving everything up to His will. Only in this way we, "the little flock", will be leaven in the midst of humanity; because only a personal encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ, to whom we wish to lead every man and woman, can save mankind from falling and becoming a prisoner of evil.

To be aware of our Christian vocation means believing that love is possible and that we can love because we are created in the image of God, it means that with His grace we can experience the love God and help His light enter the world of today so in need of this love. (Cfr. DCE 39). Sr Elisabetta Adamiak, SSPC. (Agenzia Fides 22/7/2006; righe 38, parole 537)