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Missionary Prayer Intention - December 2006 The Holy Father's missionary prayer intention: "That missionaries all over the world may live their vocation to be faithful followers of Christ with joy and enthusiasm" Comment by Cardinal Nicolas Lopez Rodriguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - The Church, from the beginning, has been the depositary of the Message of Salvation entrusted to her by Jesus Christ through the Apostles and at the same time the duty to preach the Lord's teachings to all peoples. Let us call to mind the mandate Jesus gave the Church on the day of his Ascension: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." (Mt 28, 19-20)

After Pentecost the Apostles started to preach with joy and enthusiasm guided by the Holy Spirit. We should underline that the Church exists to evangelise as the Servant of God Paul VI teaches in the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi. This means that every son and daughter of the Church shares, with different responsibility, in this mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to the whole world, although people.

When we propose to pray for missionaries we know they need our solidarity. We know many of them respond to their vocation with admirable spirit of generosity and commitment even under difficult and at time heroic conditions. This is why we must pray that the may "live their vocation to be faithful followers of Christ with joy and enthusiasm".

Being far from one's homeland, learning a new language, new customs and culture very different from one's own, living with other religions are permanent challenges to be faced with firm faith and trust in the Lord who gives strength to bear witness to him with value and integrity.

I have always considered the missionary vocation one of the most privileged vocations in the Church. While in the seminary from the very first year we learned to love the missions and to pray for missionaries. Without a doubt missionaries should live their vocation with joy and enthusiasm but this is something which only the Lord can grant.

Jesus promised his Apostles when he sent them to preach: "I am with you always until the end of time". We live in this certainty: the Lord is with his Church always, and we pray that our beloved missionaries may experience this conviction and fill them with joy and enthusiasm in their beautiful demanding task. I urge you to pray fervently for missionaries so they may experience our affection and our closeness. Cardinal Nicolas Lopez Rodriguez (Agenzia Fides 14/12/2006; righe 31, parole 426)

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