

29TH ORDINARY SUNDAY

1st Reading – Isaiah 6:1-6

2nd Reading – Romans 10:9-18

Gospel Reading – Mathew 28:16-20



Year B/White

MISSION SUNDAY

20th October, 2024

Introduction

In 1926, Pope Pius XI decided that the Church needed a special day on which to pray for missionaries and to renew her commitment to the missions. Today, the catholic church observes World Mission Day all around the world, as a sign of support and solidarity for missions and missionaries everywhere. Pope Francis has chosen this year the theme for World mission Sunday 2024 is *“Go and Invite Everyone to the Banquet.”* It reflects on urgent call to bring God’s love to everyone. The Christian faith has reached to every country of the world today but that does not mean that there is no more scope for missionary work. We have to strengthen our missionary efforts so that more and more people may come to the light of Christ. We need to extend our ministry to people who are not yet become believers but thirst for the Word of God.

Let us join in this universal mission to spread the Gospel and invite all to experience the joy of Christ’s message!

Homily

**“Go and invite everyone to the Banquet!”
(Mt 22:9)**

The theme World Mission Day is taken from the Gospel parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14). After the guests refused his invitation, the king, tells his servants: “Go therefore to the thoroughfares and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find” (v. 9). Reflecting on this passage in the context of the parable and of Jesus’ own life, we can discern several important aspects of evangelization. The Church on her primary task is to preach of the Gospel in today’s world.

1. “Go and invite!”

Mission is a tireless going out to invite others to the Lord’s banquet. In the king’s command to his servants, we find two words that express the heart of the mission: “to go out” and “to invite.”

We need to remember that the servants had previously been sent to deliver the king’s invitation to the guests. Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all people, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and messenger of the Father who went out in search of the lost sheep of the people of Israel and desired to go even further, in order to reach even the most distant sheep (Jn 10:16).

He told his disciples, “Go!”, thus involving them in his own mission (Lk 10:3; Mk 16:15). The Church continues to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles. Pope thanks all the missionaries who have left everything behind to go far from their homeland and bring the Good News to places where people have not yet received it or received it only recently.

MISSION SUNDAY

Prayer of the Faithful

Response: **Lord, increase our zeal.**

1. For the Pope, the bishops, the clergy and the religious that they may courageously preach the gospel to one and all, taking advantage of the rapid means of communication available today.

2. For vocations to priestly and religious life, that the pastoral care of the people may go on unhindered.

3. For people who contribute generously for the upkeep of our parishes and institutions run by the Church through monetary contributions as well as their valuable time that they may be blessed by the Lord.

4. For all of us present for the Eucharistic celebration that encouraged by the words of the Lord Jesus we may go forth and bear witness to our Christian faith with courage and zeal.



Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the “crossroads” of today’s world.

To return to the king’s command in the parable, the servants are told not only to “go”, but also to “invite”: “Come to the wedding!” (Mt 22:4). As we can imagine, the servants conveyed the king’s invitation with urgency but also with great respect and kindness. In the same way, the mission of bringing the Gospel to every creature must necessarily imitate the same “style” of the One who is being preached. In proclaiming to the world “the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 36).

2. “To the marriage feast”

In the parable, the king asks the servants to bring the invitation to his son’s wedding banquet. That banquet is a reflection of the eschatological banquet. It is an image of ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God, fulfilled even now by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God who has given us life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

We know that among the first Christians missionary zeal had a powerful eschatological dimension. They sensed the urgency of the preaching of the Gospel. Today too it is important to maintain this perspective, since it helps us to evangelize with the joy of those who know that “the Lord is near” and with the hope of those who are pressing forward towards the goal, when all of us will be with Christ at his wedding feast in the kingdom of God.

This fullness of life, which is Christ’s gift, is anticipated even now in the banquet of the Eucharist, which the Church celebrates at the Lord’s command in memory of him. Every Eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the Eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (Is 25:6-9)

3. “Everyone”

The third and last reflection concerns the recipients of the King’s invitation: “everyone”. As Pope emphasized, “This is the heart of mission: that ‘all’, excluding no one. Every mission of ours, then, is born from the heart of Christ in order that he may draw all to himself”

Today, in a world torn apart by divisions and conflicts, Christ’s Gospel remains the gentle yet firm voice that calls individuals to encounter one another, to recognize that they are brothers and sisters and to rejoice in harmony amid diversity. “God our Saviour desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

Christ’s missionary disciples have always had a heartfelt concern for all persons, whatever their social or even moral status. The parable of the banquet tells us that, at the king’s orders, the servants gathered “all whom they found, both good and bad” (Mt 22:10). What is more, “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Lk 14:21), in a word, the least of our brothers and sisters, those marginalized by society, are the special guests of the king.

Finally, let us lift our gaze to Mary, who asked Jesus to perform his first miracle precisely at a wedding feast, in Cana of Galilee (Jn 2:1-12). The Lord offered to the newlyweds and all the guests an abundance of new wine, as a foreshadowing of the nuptial banquet that God is preparing for all at the end of time. Let us implore her maternal intercession for the evangelizing mission of Christ’s disciples in our own time. With the joy and loving concern of our Mother, with the strength born of tenderness and affection (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288), let us go forth to bring to everyone the invitation of the King, our Saviour. Holy Mary, Star of Evangelization, pray for us!

Conclusion

The essence of mission is to go out and invite others to share in the joy and hope we receive through Christ’s Resurrection. This hope isn’t just for us.

It is meant to be shared with the whole world. As Pope Francis reminds us, the heart of our mission is to spread the Good News of God’s love, which has the power to transform lives and heal our world.

As we gather around the Eucharistic table today, let us remember that the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the special guests at God’s banquet. Together, let’s respond to Christ’s call to ‘Go and invite everyone to the banquet.’

Let’s be the light and hope our world desperately needs, bearing witness to the love of Christ in all that we do. Please pray for our sisters and brothers and for the work of missionaries throughout the world.

On World Mission Sunday, we join our Holy Father in supporting his missions.



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