

20 September 2015

Home Mission Sunday

Supporting the work of evangelisation in England and Wales

Theme: **PROCLAIM God's Mercy**



Catholic Bishops' Conference
of England and Wales

Dear Sisters, Fathers and Brothers,

AN INVITATION

You will be aware that Pope Francis has written recently: "May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst! ... The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person." (*Misericordiae Vultus* 5, 12)

PROCLAIM God's Mercy

On 20 September the bishops in England and Wales invite every parish and religious house to celebrate Home Mission Sunday. In choosing this year's theme two priorities are particularly proposed for prayer and reflection:

PROCLAIM: That as a fruit of prayer every Catholic, parish and religious house will take a new step to share their faith more joyfully and confidently, and so build missionary parishes and communities.

God's Mercy: That Catholic individuals, parishes and religious houses will consider afresh how they will present the 'balm of God's mercy' to others, in response to Pope Francis' announcement that there be a Jubilee Year of Mercy, starting in December.

HELPFUL AND FREE PARISH RESOURCES

Free promotional cards about Home Mission Sunday have been sent to your community for distribution and are accompanied by additional materials online at www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Research suggests that the majority of baptised Catholics rarely have contact with their local parish. Further, that the number of people who identify themselves as having 'no religion' is on the rise. Please help us, through your prayers and the taking of a second collection on 20 September (if your community runs a parish), to develop new resources and strategies to reach out to people with the message of God's unconditional love and mercy. The funds raised support the work of the Bishops' Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. For an overview of the work done in the past year, please visit the web address above. There is so much more we could do if we had the financial backing.

THANK YOU

Home Mission Sunday is one of three mandatory collections requested by the bishops each year. On 20 September the appeal is for the work of evangelisation on our own doorstep; to those in our families and local communities who have never encountered Jesus Christ, or have become distant from Him and the life of the Church. **Thank you in advance for your support of this urgent and vital work.**

With my thanks and with kindest wishes,
Yours devotedly,

+ Mark O'Toole .

Rt Rev Mark O'Toole (Plymouth)

Chair, Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis

www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15

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INSIDE THIS PACKAGE YOU SHOULD FIND:

- A letter from Bishop Mark O'Toole
- Home Mission Sunday materials for distribution on 20 September 2015
- Suggested newsletter insert and a link to liturgical materials
- Guidance note about what to do with the second collection please
- PROCLAIM '15: Information about a new set of materials to support practically the building of missionary parishes



SUGGESTED NEWSLETTER INSERT AND WEBSITE NOTICE

Please kindly assist us by promoting Home Mission Sunday and the second collection, in your community (and parish) newsletter, on your website and as a notice at the end of Sunday Mass. You may find the following draft paragraph useful; it can be adapted for use the weekend before (13 September), and on the weekend of the celebration (20 September). The money raised makes possible the bishops' work of evangelisation nationally.

HOME MISSION SUNDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2015

Theme: PROCLAIM God's Mercy

Home Mission Sunday is celebrated today and is themed: PROCLAIM God's Mercy. On this day we are encouraged to pray for the work of evangelisation in England and Wales, remembering in our prayers especially those whom we know are distant from the life of faith. Please support the second collection which funds the bishops' national work of evangelisation and the development of this year's Proclaim '15: Building Missionary Parishes initiative. The collection also ensures that the Catholic Faith Centre is resourced to respond to those who have questions about the Catholic Faith. It is possible to donate online at: www.catholicnews.org.uk/donations Commemorative prayer cards are available to take away. Please support the work of Home Mission through your prayers and generosity. For more information see: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15 God bless you and thank you.

LITURGICAL MATERIALS

Some free materials including Prayers of the Faithful are available for download at: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15

COLLECTION REMITTANCE PLEASE

The total amount collected in your parish (if your community runs one) for Home Mission Sunday should be sent to your Diocesan Finance Office, according to the procedures applicable in your diocese. It should be clearly identified as having been collected for 'Home Mission Sunday 2015'. Each Diocesan Finance Office will then forward the cumulative sum to the Bishops' Conference – Secretariat. Please do not send money directly from your parish to the Bishops' Conference - Secretariat.

If parishioners wish to make a donation by cheque, please kindly ask them to make cheques payable to your parish. These can then be paid-in and accounted for on your parish weekly income record as a donation to a second collection and incorporated within the total sum. We also have an online donate facility at: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15 For legacies left to benefit the work of Home Mission, please contact the Bishops' Conference fundraiser: Matt.Feeley@cbcew.org.uk

PROCLAIM '15: BUILDING MISSIONARY PARISHES

Your community's generosity has already helped us, with partners, to deliver this year's Proclaim '15: Building Missionary Parishes initiative. A breadth of new free materials generated through this project is available on www.catholicnews.org.uk/proclaim15 It includes: easy to download 'how to' sheets containing top evangelisation tips, film recordings of talks and presentations recorded at the National Catholic Evangelisation Conference in July, an album of professionally shot free photographs and workshops materials.

Interested in setting up a parish evangelisation team? Contact the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk for information about the bishops' Crossing the Threshold initiative: Clare.Ward@cbcew.org.uk

Thank you for your support and God bless you.