

## Why does the Church have missionaries?

God loves everyone and sent Jesus so that we may be free from all that contradicts his loving plan - the Kingdom. Because we love God we try to imitate that same love for everyone; this is faith in God: it is what inspires the work of missionaries.

## Who are missionaries?

Every Christian by virtue of their baptism is called to be missionary; to tell and invite others to share in the Good News of Jesus. Many lay people give their lives offering others the gift of faith; however, it is usually priests and religious sisters who are the most visible signs of this work, and they are usually referred to as missionaries.

## What is mission?

Mission is sharing the love of God with all his children. The Church thinks of mission as a shared venture involving all parts of its family, and Missio is the primary instrument of this cooperation. It enables Catholics in every country to contribute to the building, strengthening and sustaining of local church communities around the world. Through the generosity of Catholics, Missio supports the Church in countries where it is too young or too poor to be self-sufficient.

Practically this means that Missio helps build churches, parishes, presbyteries, parish halls and convents, and trains pastoral workers, priests and sisters. The priests and sisters and pastoral workers based in these churches and convents provide education, healthcare and food. However, most importantly, they provide hope as they proclaim and show others that God loves them as his sons and daughters called to live life to the full with dignity. It is this faith in Jesus - in action - which makes a huge difference to the lives of many, many people.

## What can I do?

Our response to this call to share in the missionary work of the Church must be reflected in our words, our actions, our generosity and our prayer. Our prayer for missionaries and for our brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world builds unity in a divided world.

World Mission Sunday reminds us that we are part of a worldwide family, a communion with all our fellow Catholics. We unite ourselves to all those who have received and teach the Gospel and those who long to hear the liberating message of Christ. Those in the new and emerging churches pray for us - and we pray for them.

*Missio is part of the worldwide network of Pontifical Mission Societies*

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## HOLY FATHER'S MESSAGE AND MISSION INTENTIONS

### An abridged version of the Holy Father's Message for World Mission Sunday 2012

“ Called to radiate the Word of truth ”

### World Mission Sunday

The celebration of World Mission Sunday has a very special meaning for the year 2012. This year, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, and of the opening of the Year of Faith and of the Synod of Bishops on the theme of the New Evangelisation, all contribute to reaffirming the Church's desire to engage with greater courage and zeal in the mission to bring the Gospel to the very ends of the earth.

### The Missionary Mandate

The number of those awaiting Christ is still immense. The Second Vatican Council and the subsequent teaching of the Church insist in a very special way on the missionary mandate, which Christ entrusted to his disciples. This must be a commitment of all the People of God, bishops, priests, deacons, men and women religious and lay people.

### Mission of Witnessing

Today the mission to the ends of the earth must be part of every Church endeavour. 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 of witnessing and proclaiming him to the world until he comes. We must be attentive to those who do not yet know Christ.

## Faith is to be shared

The concern to evangelise must never remain on the margins of Church activity and of the personal life of Christians. Rather, it must strongly characterise it. Faith is a gift that is given to us to be shared. It is a talent received so that it may bear fruit. It is a light that must never be hidden. It is the most important gift that has been given to us in our lives and which we cannot keep to ourselves.

## Growing in Communion

I thank the Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio), the primary instruments for cooperation in the universal mission of the Church across the world. Through their action, the proclamation of the Gospel bears witness to Christ and is lived out in our service of our neighbour through justice for the poorest, education in isolated villages, medical care in remote areas, freedom from poverty, the reintegration of the marginalised, support for the development of peoples, the breaking down of ethnic divisions, and respect for life in all its stages.



25 January 2012

This is an abridged version of the Pope's message.

**The full text is available from Missio at the address on the reverse and at:**

**[www.missio.org.uk](http://www.missio.org.uk)**

## THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION INTENTIONS 2013

### **Please include these in your Parish Newsletter and in the Sunday Bidding Prayers at least once a month**

*Join with the Holy Father in praying that:*

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**January** - the Holy Spirit may strengthen the Christians of the Middle East in faithfulness and perseverance

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**February** - people at war and in conflict may lead the way in building a future of peace

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**March** - bishops, priests, and deacons may be tireless messengers of the Gospel to the ends of the earth

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**April** - mission Churches may be signs and instruments of hope and resurrection

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**May** - all seminaries may form priests after the Heart of Christ, wholly dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel

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**June** - Christian communities may effectively promote a new evangelisation where secularisation is strongest

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**July** - throughout Asia doors may be opened to the messengers of the Gospel

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**August** - the Church in Africa may promote peace and justice through its faithful proclamation of the Gospel

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**September** - Christians suffering persecution may be prophets of Christ's love through their witness

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**October** - World Mission Sunday may help us realise that we are not just beneficiaries of God's Word but must also share it with others

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**November** - the Churches of Latin America may send missionaries to other countries

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**December** - Christians, enlightened by the Incarnate Word, may prepare all people for the coming of our Saviour