

OCTOBER 20 2024 FATHER DAVID REILANDER

Today we celebrate World Mission Sunday. Although I am the president of Catholic Missions in Canada, our organization does not benefit from this collection. Catholic Missions in Canada supports missions only within the boundaries of Canada. However, this collection is for *ad gentes*—for the developing world.

Pope Francis has spoken about Mission Sunday, saying, “Missions are a tireless effort, of going out to all, to invite them to encounter God.” He emphasizes the importance of being missionary disciples of Christ. This applies to all of us—the baptized—who, through our baptism, are charged to be missionaries. We may not go to street corners and stand on soapboxes to preach, but we are called to challenge everyone, even the baptized, to come closer and closer to Jesus Christ.

How do we come closer to Jesus Christ? By acting more like Him. As we learn from the book of Genesis, we are made in the image and likeness of God—not in physical appearance, but in terms of holiness. We are given rational souls that seek to be moral and to be like God. So, unlike James and John, we don’t try to lord it over others. Instead, as they did after the resurrection, James gave his life for the Gospel, and John formed a community, wrote a Gospel, letters, and the book of Revelation.

On this Mission Sunday, think about how you can be sent. Jesus sent the Apostles into the world to proclaim the Gospel and to baptize. We are also sent into the world, to each other. Of course, today’s collection is for developing nations with Catholic missions that need our help, and they absolutely do. The developing Church often lacks the resources necessary to sustain the faith. But we also have a mission to each other, even to our family members.

This doesn't mean we should badger our children who aren't going to Mass or haven't married in the Church, or haven't baptized their children. It means loving the unlovable, forgiving the unforgivable, and being a disciple of Jesus Christ with a smile and the joy of faith. How else does the world come to know Jesus Christ, to know the Holy Trinity, but through us? We must be ambassadors of the Lord.

We are called not only to help those seeking to become Christian or Catholic, but also to enrich the faith of those who already are Catholic. We do this by praying for them, giving them a good example, and helping them come before the Lord.

Let us also pray today for missionaries throughout the world, that they may be given the zeal and joy of the Lord. May they always go forth and never hold back.