

Mission of the Church

CALL TO PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you send us out on mission. Empower us to unite our work with the work of evangelization done by the Catholic Church all over the world. By your guidance, align our hearts to make this mission core to who we are and all that we do. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Summary

We long to be part of an adventure bigger than and beyond ourselves: a mission. Not only do we each have a mission, but the Church as a whole has a mission, which is salvation in Christ. Through the Church, God is calling us to himself.

We all have deep questions. Here are a few:

- Does my life matter?
- Does having a relationship with Christ matter?
- Why is there so much brokenness in my life?
- How do I serve others?
- If God is good, why do so many bad things happen?

These deep questions call for deep answers—and these answers are found in an encounter with a person, Jesus Christ, not in a set of ideas.

We personally encounter Christ through the sacraments. We come to share in his divine life and receive a share in the Church's mission. The sacraments set mission ablaze in our souls. We are set on fire and given a thirst that nothing else can quench.

We cannot leave the mission of the Church to priests and religious—all of the baptized have been called to spread the Good News. If a priest is the divine physician, we are his first responders on earth, who bring the wounded to him for healing.

The mission of the Church, then, is about a Person, Jesus, who loves us ... and to bring others into relationship with the deepest desire of our hearts, the Love that saves us.

NOTES

Words That Inspire

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. – Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est 1

But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? – Romans 10:14

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. – 1 Thessalonians 5:9

Man was created for greatness—for God himself; he was created to be filled by God. But his heart is too small for the greatness to which it is destined. It must be stretched. – Benedict XVI, Spes Salvi 11

“When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church.”¹⁷⁴ Then “the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through preaching, was begun.”¹⁷⁵ As the “convocation” of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them. – CCC 767

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. How do you relate to the idea that we all long for adventure?
What adventure do you long for that might be a good analogy for your deeper mission?
2. Do you seek personal conversion? How?
3. How is your own personal ongoing conversion rooted in the sacraments?
4. What is your reaction to Sister Miriam's analogy of the paramedics and the surgeon?

Team Workshop Prompt

Sister Miriam offered the analogy that lay people are like the first responders or paramedics whose work is to bring patients to the surgeons (the priests), since through their priesthood they have access to the sacraments.

This exercise is designed to improve the synergy that should exist between the priests and lay people in your parish. On a large poster board or whiteboard, draw a line down the middle. At the top of the left-hand column, write “clergy support.” Here, you will list ways that parishioners can support the parish priests and deacons in their mission. At the top of the right-hand column, write “lay support,” where you will list ways that the clergy can support lay people in their mission. Set a timer for five minutes and have everyone brainstorm. Ask someone to act as secretary to record what is offered. When you have finished, discuss the following questions:

1. What support do priests and deacons currently offer parishioners? What support do parishioners offer the clergy at present?
2. Discuss three ways that the mutual relationship between clergy and laity can be improved?
3. How can we develop a plan to implement these suggestions?

[illegible]