



MISSION MONTH BOOKLET



I write to welcome this Booklet for Mission Month 2018, produced by World Mission Ireland (WMI). The material in this booklet is aimed in assisting us to live mission month as fully as possible. As we enter into this month of Mission I would like to invite you to reflect on some thoughts from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Patroness of the Missions.

St. Thérèse might well be called the 'Missionary of everyday life'. Her maxim was simply, 'to love as Jesus loves'. From her writings we learn that she is very down to earth in her approach to life. Thérèse experienced in her life that it is the daily encounters with those close to us that challenge us most. Thérèse did not find living with others easy, no more than we do. Of the sisters in her community she said, 'One Sister attracts, another doesn't'. Thérèse said: 'Love consists in bearing with the faults of others, in not being surprised at their weaknesses, in being edified by the smallest act of virtue we see them practice'.



Each one of us is called to radiate love like St. Thérèse did, a love shown in small ways each day. Pope Francis calls this commitment to daily witness being a Missionary Disciple. In the evening of life, St. John of the Cross said 'we will be judged on love'. St. Thérèse wanted to 'love as Jesus loved' and we are challenged to do the same. As St. Thérèse was a missionary of love in her community so each one of us can be a missionary of love to the world where we live and work each day of our lives.



Mission month also invites us to reflect on a deeper understanding of the Church's call to mission. The Second Vatican Council defined missionary activity in the following terms: 'the special aim of missionary activity is the evangelisation and the implantation of the church among peoples or groups in which it has not yet taken root'. We are all called to be missionaries – not as a burden but rather as something rising from within us, as was the case with Peter and John who said after they had experienced the Good News of Jesus Christ: 'how can we stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard?'

We become missionaries through firstly, like St. Thérèse, the witness of our own lives, daily lives lived with family and friends and graciously facing the challenges that this brings to us.

Secondly, through our prayers for the work of missionaries throughout the world and for an increase in missionary vocations – women and men who will follow the call of the Lord and go out from their own environments and countries to bring the message of hope and salvation of the Gospel.

Thirdly, through the sharing of our resources with those who need them in order to be able to continue the work of preaching the gospel – training of students for the missionary priesthood, training of sisters for missionary religious congregations, the training and support of catechists, for the building of churches and clinics, and for justice and peace projects. I hope the material in this little booklet for the month of Mission 2018 will be fruitful in deepening our understanding of what it means to be called a "Missionary Disciple".

My thanks to Fr. Martin Kelly CSSp, WMI Director and his staff, and all those who have taken the time to contribute to the booklet.

St. Thérèse, Patroness of the Missions, pray for us and give us all a renewed interest and passion for Mission in our time.

**Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, SMA
Chair, National Mission Council.**



Monday, October 01 - St. Therese of the Child Jesus (The Little Flower)

Today, the Church celebrates the life of Thérèse Martin of Alençon, France. Thérèse was the youngest child born to Louis and Zélie Martin, in 1873. At the age of fifteen she followed her two older sisters to the Carmel of Lisieux, where she lived until she died of TB, aged twenty-four. A short life but one that has had profound influence on the entire Church and the work of Mission. Her life in the convent was the normal life of a novice at that time – the daily round of prayer and work. Thérèse lived her daily life with its joys and trials, following her “little way” of simple trust in the love of God. That is the attraction of Thérèse for us – she showed us that through the ordinary things of every day all people can become saints. She was declared a saint in 1925. In 1927 she was declared Co-Patron of the Missions, and in 1997 a Doctor of the Church.

October is the month of prayer for Missionaries and for the success of the Church’s missions throughout the world. St. Thérèse teaches us about prayer when she wrote:

“What would I do without prayer? It is one of the all-powerful weapons God has put into my hands.” She also wrote “For me prayer is a surge of the heart. It is a simple look turned towards Heaven. It is a cry of recognition and of love embracing both trial and joy”.

Thérèse prayed for missionaries and the spread of the Gospel. The important message for us is that we do not have to use many words when we pray but prayer must come from the heart, the deepest part of ourselves. For St Thérèse God was a loving Father, so it was natural for her to turn to Him with childlike trust and confidence.

In the same spirit we turn to our loving Father to pray throughout this month for all missionaries:

Prayer

Obtain for us an increase of missionary zeal and generosity. Protect our missionaries; help them in their labours, support them in their sufferings and poverty; teach them to follow and love Jesus more ardently.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly, SMA



Tuesday, October 02 - Holy Guardian Angels

Introduction: We celebrate today the feast of the Guardian Angels (Happy feast-day all with names Malachy and Angela). Angels in the bible had many functions. They praised God (Ps. 103:20), served as his messengers to the world (Luke 1:11-20, 26-38; 2:9-14), watched over God's people (Ps. 91:11-12), and were sometimes instruments of God's judgment.

Homily pointers:

- It is our belief that God cares for each individual. In times of depression or temptation we can believe we are too small to matter. This feast reminds us that each of us has an angel looking after us.
- At Mass in the Preface we join with “the angels and saints in their hymn of praise”. We are not an isolated community, but part of the whole church, in this world and the next – the heavenly Jerusalem.
- At our funeral the church will pray: *May the angels lead you into paradise... May choirs of angels welcome you and lead you to the bosom of Abraham; and where Lazarus is poor no longer may you find eternal rest.*
- Access to power is important. That is why some companies spend millions on lobbying, thousands on a breakfast, or a fat sum to hear a retired prime minister's speech. But children (disciples in general) have this access for free: their “angels ... are continually in the presence of my Father...”
- As church we must critically examine our record regarding “little ones.”

Michael McHugh

*Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation,
each Christian is sent forth to be a missionary, “a missionary disciple.”*

*The Church as a whole is called to “go forth”
to bring the words of eternal life to all the peripheries of our world.*

(Pope Francis, Phoenix Park, August 26, 2018)



Wednesday, October 03

The book of Job portrays the struggle of a good and holy man to understand undeserved suffering. In today's reading Job oversteps the boundary between Creator and creature, regarding God as an equal, answerable to Job in a court of law.

Luke's introduction to Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem culminating in the cross continues with a warning about the radical demands of discipleship which is set above every other duty, even care for the dead, a sacred duty in Israel.

HOMILY NOTES

Pope Francis begins Exhortation on Mission with: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." This is the joy that characterises *committed* Christians and acts as an antidote to pessimism, desolation, inner emptiness and loneliness. At the heart of our faith lies the possibility of a personal encounter with the risen Christ. Yet many nowadays live lives that seem like a Lent without Easter, the Pope says.

If we have experienced the love of Christ which gives meaning and hope to our lives, we will want to share that love with others as well. During October, Mission Month, we are invited to reach out to all in need of the light of the Gospel. For the joy of the Gospel is meant for everybody. That is why the Church as a community of *missionary* disciples reaches out during the month of October to those spiritual deserts into which Christ needs to be introduced or re-introduced. Every one of us can contribute to this missionary endeavour by offering our prayers, our sufferings or monetary contributions. In today's world, many people are gripped by fear and desperation as the joy of living fades away in their struggle to exist, often in isolation. As *committed* Christians, we are challenged to find ways of communicating Christ wherever we happen to find ourselves. We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive, a message that cannot mislead or disappoint, a truth about life that is never out of date. So let us, as *committed* Christians, reach out and spread the joy of the Gospel during this Mission Month.

Maurice Hogan SSC

In the beginning God created heaven and earth
(Gen 1:1)



Thursday, October 04 - St Francis

Today we celebrate the feast of Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis opens his encyclical on the care of the earth -Laudato Si' - with the words "Praise be to you, my Lord" which are taken from a canticle by St Francis. It reminds us in this month of reflection on Mission that our common home "is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us"

To begin our celebration we can ask pardon for the times we have damaged our environment.

Homily

Many people gathered here for this Mass know someone, a priest, brother, sister or layperson who has left home and gone to work in the developing world. We refer to them as Missionaries. We have supported them with our prayers and financially. They established the Catholic Church in the places they worked in. Maybe in this October month of Mission we need a deeper understanding of Mission.

In today's Gospel Jesus send out seventy two disciples to tell the people that the "Kingdom of God is very near to you" The Kingdom that Jesus talks about in the Gospels means that all creation is blessed by God, loved by God, protected by God and God's life infuses all that exists. Jesus came to redeem all creation. All that exists is sacred, "charged with the grandeur of God" to quote Hopkins. It is our home and also God's home.

Each baptised person is a missionary, called by God, sent by Jesus to care for each other, especially the poor and marginalised but also to care for the earth, our common home. This is our Mission. If each of us does the little we can to be a good neighbour and to keep our rivers and lakes clean, recycle our waste, avoid dumping our rubbish everywhere and look after our environment, then we are looking after God's creation. We are fulfilling our mission. Like the seventy two we are being sent out to show by word and lifestyle that the "Kingdom of God is very near to you". Instead of Prayers of the Faithful the celebrant might read the following Prayer for the Earth from Laudato Si'.

Daithí Kenneally CSSp

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us

(John 1:14)



A Prayer for the Earth

*All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.*

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

*Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

*O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature*

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.*

Amen

(Laudato Si', 246)

**Friday, October 05****A message to my granddaughter.**

Abigail, you might not journey all the way to the sources of the sea or have an inkling of the extent of the earth or meet the janitors of Shadowland (Job 38:16-18) but I pray that, like Job, you will learn to be silent before God Job (40:4); that you will see the presence of God in the beauty of creation and find God in the chaos of circumstances outside your control.

When you were baptised in July this year you were charged to be a missionary, you were anointed in the priestly, prophetic and leadership ministry of Christ (Rite of Baptism: Anointing after Baptism 98), you became a member of a church that exists to evangelise. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 14, Pope Paul VI) Your baptism calls you to share the knowledge that God is above all merciful and all pardoning (*Opening Prayer*: O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy) and to know that wherever you go, whatever you do, God's hand will lead you and hold you fast (Psalm 139:9).

Abigail you have been given the privilege and honour to witness through word and actions to the great news of God's redemption; God's loving message of freedom and fullness of life. Don't measure your ministry/worth by the response you receive or think you have failed when you are rejected (Luke 10:16). Speak without necessarily expecting people to listen, act without necessarily expecting results and if at times it feels like God is not there, look for and celebrate glimpses of God's presence in and through the people you encounter. Draw on God's strength and continue Christ's mission!

Your loving and proud

Nana.

Jane Ferguson

A light of revelation the Gentiles
(Luke 2:32)



Saturday, October 06

Job 42:1-3,5-6,12-17. The book of Job ends as it began – with Job having a family and wealth. In between he argued his innocence, his friends argued his guilt and God spoke of his wonder, evident in creation. The big change is Job’s confession:

“I knew you then only by hearsay; but now, having seen you with my own eyes, I retract all I have said, and in dust and ashes I repent.”

Luke 10:17-24: The Joy of the Gospel is the name of Pope Francis’s exhortation on mission. Sent out as lambs among wolves, the seventy-two “*came back rejoicing.*” Then Jesus was “*filled with joy by the Holy Spirit.*”

What give us joy?

1. Offspring: For example: John the Baptist “will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth.”
2. Recovery from ill health: Jesus healed so many.
3. Good overcoming evil: “I saw Satan cast down.”
4. Long-term security: “their names are written in heaven.”
5. Knowledge of how we are blessed is the real source of joy: The Father has been revealed to them, and they have seen and heard what even prophets and kings desired to see and hear but did not.

A joy shared is not halved but doubled. “Share the joy.” If we do it with chocolate, why not help missionaries share the good news that “in Christ we have all been reconciled to God?”

Joseph Clancy

*For, as the rain and the snow come down from the sky
and do not return before having watered the earth,
fertilising it and making it germinate
to provide seed for the sower and food to eat,
so it is with the word that goes from my mouth:
it will not return to me unfulfilled*

(Isaiah 55:10-12)



October 07, 27th Sunday of the Year
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Genesis 2:18-24: “It is not good for man to be alone” and the decision is to make a helper who matches him, complements him, while not being identical to him. The animals are brought to be named. They are close to man, shaped from the land and called “living creatures,” but are not suitable helpmates. Only the woman is. The marriage bond is even stronger than that between parent and child, for “a man forsakes his father and mother and sticks to his wife” – at first sight something astonishing when filial duty was next to loyalty to God.

Hebrews 2:9-11: Jesus’ solidarity with his people is the theme of the second reading. A Congolese proverb sums it up: “Unless you live in the water you cannot see the fish’s tears.” Without this, mission is never possible, not by Jesus, not by us. The reading focus is on Jesus’ suffering, death, and exaltation. For a while he was lower than the angels, becoming “like his brothers and sisters in every respect” – even death, the supreme form of solidarity. He is “the leader who would take them to their salvation.”

Mark 10:2-16: As is often, there were various opinions on divorce. Some, e.g. the Essenes, argued against divorce at any level. We know what happened to John the Baptist when he crossed King Herod. So there were political implications to the question put to Jesus. Others claimed divorce could be at the husband’s whim (his wife was his property), others only for a serious reason. Divorce was common in the time of Jesus, and marriage offered little security for a woman who could be treated as a disposable possession and dismissed as her husband wished. Jesus seeks to change all that.

Martin Kelly CSSp

*The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature,
since it is from the mission of the Son
and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin,
in accordance with the decree of God the Father.*

(Ad Gentes 1)



Homily

Jesus' teaching against divorce was given in a context where husbands might divorce wives but not vice-versa. According to one school (Shammai), divorce was legitimate only for a serious reason; according to another (Hillel), for just about any reason.

Jesus rejects self-serving argumentation endorsing power and privilege. He upholds mutuality, equality of respect and fidelity in all human relations, particularly in marriage. Fidelity, a participation in God's fidelity, beautifully expresses Jesus' directive that we should love one another *as he has loved us*.

Paul develops this and directs husbands to love their spouses as Christ loves his people. Note that the metaphor expresses the faithful bridegroom being like Christ and *not* Christ being like a bridegroom, as if only males could represent Christ.

Fidelity is the norm yet divorce happens. No one loves perfectly, all relationships, faithful ones included, have an element of incompleteness and even of selfishness. Many divorced people genuinely aspire to a sincerely ethical life, as do married people. Re-married people can so display generosity, fidelity and faith, that it makes little sense to speak of them as living in sin.

Besides, the Eucharistic Table is healing for the wounded more than award for the imagined righteous.

John O'Brien CSSp

Prayers of the Faithful

Introduction: On the first Sunday of Mission Month we present our prayers to our Father who sent his only Son among us that we may have life and have it to the full.

1. We pray for the Church: that we may more and more put on the attitude of Christ and empty ourselves of all that is contrary to his spirit.

Lord, hear us.

2. We pray for the grace of conversion: that we may be faithful to our calling as Christians, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

Lord, hear us.

I am to stay at your house today
(Luke 19:5)



3. We pray for the unity of Christians: that all believers may be of one mind and heart and work together in serving God and confronting evil.

Lord, hear us.

4. We pray for all who are being persecuted for their religion or suffer for their beliefs: that God will strengthen them in their time of trial.

Lord, hear us.

5. We pray for all serving in difficult and distant places, particularly missionaries, volunteers and aid workers: that God will guide their service and keep them safe.

Lord, hear us.

6. We pray for those who are experiencing difficulties in their family life: that through the support of those who love them they may strive to live as one.

Lord, hear us.

Concluding Prayer: Father, you know us through and through. Grant us what we ask and particularly what we need. We ask these and all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

The Deep End Three key words of the heart

The traditional marriage ceremony of the Hamar people in southern Ethiopia ends with the ‘tazma blessing’. Tazma is dark brown honey made by honey ants and normally found in hot dry areas such as the edges of deserts. The honey ants don’t sting so the honey can be harvested freely without a sting-risk. The blessing is that the love exchange between the couple be risk free and generous.

In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis says that “Young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope” AL 219. He then suggests three habits to keep family relationships ‘sting-free’; the habits of saying ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’ AL 266.

‘Please’ expresses tenderness as true love does not impose itself with hardness and aggression. ‘Thank you’ are not just kind words to use with strangers, in order to be polite. These are words that should be in constant use in our family lives. ‘Sorry’, we make many errors, many mistakes. By saying sorry; by learning to recognise our mistakes and to apologise is the way that the Christian family grows.

I am forever thankful for the years that I spent with the Hamar

In no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this

(Luke 8:10)



people. These were for me in the words of Séamus Heaney, the answering of “the need to credit marvels and revisit the thresholds of the Spirit”.

Brian O’Toole CSSp, Spiritan Missionary

Monday, October 08

Introduction to the celebration

During this October Mission Month, we are reminded that the gospel message of Jesus is not limited by geographical or cultural boundaries and that we are all called to reach out in compassion to those in need of our help.

Introduction to the readings

In the 1st reading, the missionary Paul reminds us that the Good News is not a human message but one that came through Jesus. In the gospel reading, Jesus leaves us in no doubt about who is my neighbour and how this is part of our faith.

Homily reflection

We have all heard in recent times the term ‘fake news’ on TV or in social media especially on Twitter. It can be very confusing and sometimes people believe in things which are untrue. We have seen the confusion it causes in society and the harm it can do. Well, it seems that almost 2000 years ago as Christianity was spreading, ‘fake news’ was an issue in the early Church also, although people did not use that term. The missionary Paul had some harsh words to say to the Galatian community because they were following a version of the gospel of Jesus which was putting conditions on newly converted Christians, which was not called for, nor part of the message of Christ. Does this sound familiar? The story of the Good Samaritan is surely Good News for all people (not fake news). God loves us unconditionally and his message is not limited by geographical or cultural boundaries. We are all called to reach out in compassion to those in need of our help and this is part of our faith. A famous Arab proverb says: “To have a good neighbour you must be one”.

Jim Farrell, WMI

**Tuesday, October 09**

The readings today offer various paths to reflection on mission: St. Paul, of course, was the pivotal figure in Acts who urged the Christians to move out of their Hebrew context into the Greek world that was Roman-dominated. Many ask where the Jesus story would be, the Word of Jesus, without Paul who, through the mediation skills of Barnabas, motivated the first missionary impulse of stepping into another culture. The Spirit would have found another way to move where it willed, but it was the Spirit through Paul who accomplished this. In the first reading to Galatians Paul speaks of the encounter with Peter and the community at Jerusalem. It took prayer, dialogue and persuasion to convince the community in Jerusalem to think and act differently. This is the missionary way.

The visit of Jesus to the home of Martha and Mary gives us an insight into the personal encounter in mission. Two women, friends, welcome him and offer hospitality. Martha 'burdened with much serving' asked him 'do you not care?' Jesus answered, 'there is need of only one thing'. Mary listening at the Master's feet indicates she is beginning to assume the role of disciple; hearing the Word. This is not so much a preference of contemplation over action, rather a methodology: first listen and reflect and only then can we implement.

Mission is cross-cultural; the word takes root in all cultures. However, to take root needs listening, reflection and only then respectful action.

Brendan Carr CSSp

*Since the whole Church is missionary,
and the work of evangelisation is a basic duty of the People of God,
this sacred synod invites all to a deep interior renewal;
so that,
having a vivid awareness of their own responsibility for spreading the Gospel,
they may do their share in missionary work among the nations.*

(Ad Gentes 35)



Wednesday, October 10

“Your Kingdom Come....” I love this prayer. I pray it when I have no words to pray, and when I have too many words and I can’t make sense of any of them.

When it comes to mission, there is no more important prayer than ‘Your Kingdom come’. Jesus’ very next words tell us what that kingdom looks like:

“...Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven”. In fact, He is already King over all the earth, but this kingdom is rebellious, we reject God. So what are we praying for? That this world will accept its rightful King and fulfil His will.

When we surrender to His will, we are bringing the Kingdom of God that tiny bit closer. I have discovered for myself that refusing to surrender to God is like clinging to a piece of flotsam in a stormy sea, refusing to let go so that I can be rescued. When I surrender, the release of anxiety and worry is inexpressible. To hand over our will and say ‘Let your will be done’ is the ultimate act of faith.

So my question for you today is, what do you need to surrender to God? Are you holding resentment in your heart and refusing to forgive? Are you ignoring a call to ministry or overseas mission? Are you carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, when nobody asked you to? You are invited to surrender to

His will, and find safety in his Kingdom

Lou Talbot Beirne, VMM International

*Simply proclaim the Lord Christ holy in your hearts,
and always have your answer ready for people who ask you
the reason for the hope that you have*

(1 Pet 3:15)



Thursday, October 11 - St John XXIII

“Are you ... mad?” Paul’s question to the Galatians can be asked of every Christian community that compromises its faith. Seeing how quickly they abandoned the Gospel, Paul castigates them for turning their back on Christ and letting themselves be enslaved once again, exchanging the way of the Spirit for a worthless way of life grounded on law.

In considering this, we can learn from St John XXIII on his feast day. Rather than bemoaning the problems facing the Church when opening Vatican II on this day in 1962, he challenged the Council Fathers to confront the problem of a world that does not know Christ as its centre and goal. As the Council itself subsequently clarified, this is the Church’s great mission: to make known to the world the unsurpassable riches of Christ, so that all may discover their true dignity and fulfilment in him.

Given our human waywardness, this mission is beyond us as it was for the Galatians. Yet the Gospel parable fills us with hope, assuring us that we are in the care of the One whose heart is overflowing love. Our prayers are always answered, then, even if at times in the most unexpected ways.

Joe Egan SMA

The power of evangelisation will find itself considerably diminished if those who proclaim the Gospel are divided among themselves in all sorts of ways.

Is this not perhaps one of the great sicknesses of evangelisation today?

Indeed, if the Gospel that we proclaim is seen to be rent by doctrinal disputes, ideological polarizations or mutual condemnations among Christians, at the mercy of the latter’s differing views on Christ and the Church and even because of their different concepts of society and human institutions,

how can those to whom we address our preaching fail to be disturbed, disoriented, even scandalized?

(Evangelii Nuntiandi 77)



Friday, October 12

Jesus had banished an evil demon from a man who was mute. The Pharisees watched this miracle as it happened. They saw Jesus drive the demon out of the man and heard the man speak but they still chose to say, “It is through Beelzebub, the prince of devils, that he casts out devils.” Some very human traits rushed to the surface in today’s Gospel – denial, doubt, and slander. Those watching denied that the good Jesus came from God. Others doubted and asked for a sign from heaven even though they saw him cure the man. So, when they couldn’t oppose him justly, they resorted to slander.

Jesus throws down the gauntlet to all of us in today’s Gospel because of another human trait – fence-sitting. He tells us it is time to choose. He says, if you believe it is “through the finger of God that I cast out devils, then know that the kingdom of God has come to you.” He makes it very clear. “He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters.” There is a real sense of urgency in these words today with a pressing invitation to take sides. He is on a mission to build up God’s Kingdom and there is no place for indecision. He challenges us all to say which side we belong to. Are we truly committed to building up God’s Kingdom, to joining him on his mission, or are we fence sitters?

Julieann Moran, Society of Missionary Children, WMI

Saturday, October 13

Introduction: Today’s readings help us to focus on the precious gift of faith. For Paul, the gift of faith helps to create the universal brotherhood in Christ, where all become children of God. Jesus in the Gospel welcomes all who believe in the Gospel into God’s family.

Homily

- St. Paul, missionary to the nations, went outside his Jewish nation and religion to preach the Good News to all nations. Through his letters, he kept in touch with the young Christian communities.
- There were divisions in the Galatian society: Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, male and female.

The kingdom “is like a mustard seed.”

(Mk 4:31)



- What are the divisions in our world today? e. g. poor and rich, white and black, Christians and Muslims, etc. There may be subtle divisions along ideological lines. In all of these divisions, the Good News of Christ brings us together, not to be subjects to a divisive law, but made one in Christ through faith.
- In the Gospel, we see Jesus with a crowd, carrying out his mission of preaching God's love. A woman, blessing Jesus, claims that Jesus is so wonderful that he is a blessing to his mother. Jesus does not deny the blessing to his mother but seizes the moment to point to the basis for blessing for all disciples: those who hear God's Word and obey it will be blessed. As baptized Christians, we share in this blessing, and it is our mission to spread this blessing to all peoples, bring all into God's loving family.

Anne Falola OLA, Nigeria

28th Sunday of the Year, October 14

Wisdom 7:7-11 King Solomon is the speaker in this poem. He recalls how he prayed and asked God for wisdom. He recognised the one thing that he needed most. In finding wisdom he also found life in abundance.

Hebrews 4:12-13 God who spoke through Scripture and in Jesus Christ still speaks to us today. That divine voice goes right to the heart of our very being. There is no aspect of human life - physical or spiritual, emotional or intellectual - that is hidden from the knowing gaze of God. We will have to answer that word with our own 'word' and to give account of our lives.

Mark 10:17-27 [30] Unlike many who came to Jesus with questions to challenge him and to try to prove him wrong, the man who comes running up to Jesus in this Gospel story is a genuine seeker who is attracted to Jesus and his teaching. The man arrives eager and enthusiastic, he departs sad. His impeccable moral life has failed to satisfy, but he decides that the fullness of life that Jesus offers comes at too high a price. He wants to be associated with Jesus and to learn his secret, but also to have all the socio-economic benefits that wealth and

I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity
(Acts 2:17)



social status bring. Those with Jesus, assuming that everything comes easier to the rich and the powerful, and that they enjoy God's favour, are amazed that Jesus made it so difficult for this man. Jesus turns their assumption on its head: God's power is such that *even* the rich can be saved, although they are at a great disadvantage in terms of entering the realm of God. The trappings of wealth and status get in the way of being a part of the new family, the loving community gathered around Jesus.

Homily Notes: We look at this story through the lens of the rich man's hunger and why it is that he goes away disappointed. The man wants 'eternal life' - not just life after death, but to be really alive now. He is 'good', but senses that something is missing. Jesus' first reply highlights the real issue: fullness of life comes not from a preoccupation with being good but by focusing on God. Then we will hear the invitation to join Jesus on his journey. The man is willing to work hard at morality but is held back from joining Jesus because his life is so full of 'stuff'. When Jesus gazes at the man with love, he sees his desire, his struggles, and his enormous potential as a human being who images God. Jesus, the Word of God, cuts through the layers that hide the man from himself and pronounces the cure for his longings: 'Get rid of everything that entangles you, use it to bless others in their need, and join me on mission.' The man balks at this and leaves sad. He does not really believe that abundant life is found by following Jesus into the world. He believes he also needs wealth, status and honour. What do we believe? True wisdom leads us beyond the quest for wealth and power, even beyond the quest to be 'good' toward finding that which is best, God. When we find God we find Life. Mission is not just about giving a few coins out of our abundance to support 'missionaries' who do the work in far-flung places. It is God's invitation to us to let go of the things that stifle us so that we can follow Jesus out of our comfort zones and into a life that blesses others. If the challenge sounds too much, then we prove Jesus right: to try to enter the realm of God while clinging to wealth and status is as tricky as a heavily laden camel trying to wiggle through a tiny space. That is why we need to ask for grace!

Dr Jessie Rogers, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

There came to power in Egypt a new king who had never heard of Joseph
(Acts 7:18)



Prayers of the Faithful:

Introduction: On the second Sunday of Mission Month we present our prayers to our Father who sent his only Son among us that we may have life and have it to the full.

1. We pray for the Church, for its leader Pope Francis, for the Bishops and all others in position of leadership: that they may be faithful witnesses to God's word.

Lord hear us

2. We pray that we may allow the word of God to penetrate our minds and hearts

Lord hear us

3. We pray for awareness: that God will open our eyes to all the blessings that we have in our lives and stir our hearts to greater gratitude for the privileges and opportunities that we have.

Lord hear us

4. We pray for all who minister to those living alone, those who are unwell or dying: that chaplains, family members, carers and neighbours may support and encourage them. Lord hear us

5. We pray for all who are grieving: that God will wipe away their tears and console them with God's presence.

Lord hear us

6. We pray for all who are persecuted for their faith and for refugees: that God will shield them from harm and give them supportive communities.

Lord hear us

Celebrant Father, you know us through and through. Grant us what we ask and particularly what we need. We ask these and all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

The Deep End The extra becomes extraordinary

During my time as a missionary in Ethiopia I often spent time at the local market or kiosks. Whenever an exchange took place and a deal done the vendor always added a little more than what was being paid for. This little extra, be it a fist of grain or coffee or an extra tomato, is the

How could I (understand) unless I have someone to guide me?

(Acts 8:31)



‘bereka’ – the blessing.

The way of the ‘little extra’ is the way of Jesus; the ‘extra mile’ and the ‘overflowing cup’. Jesus is always calling us to do the more – the extra. Today the extra in our world can become an extraordinary blessing for our brothers and sisters living in extreme poverty, and especially for the many children in our world lacking adequate education, health care and nutrition.

The ‘way of the extra’ is not about having and keeping what is in excess but rather it is about giving it away to those in need; it is about sharing. In this way we show respect for, and solidarity with, all the members of our human family.

Today what little extra can your family contribute to charity or some more time to parish service or to a good cause? Can your family do more to stop the waste of precious resources, including food, while other families are literally wasting away from hunger?

Blessings are for sharing. We should therefore never think that we are not or have not enough to share.

Brian O’Toole CSSp, Spiritan Missionary

Monday, October 15 - St. Theresa of Avila - Patroness of Spain

Introduction to the Readings: In this complicated Reading, Paul underlines that it is faith in God and Jesus Christ that matters and not the observance of laws.

Gospel: Jesus contrasts the unbelief of many Jewish people with the faith of so-called “pagans”, the Queen of the South, and the inhabitants of Nineveh.

Homily: St. Theresa was born in Ávila in Spain in 1515 at a time of social, political and religious upheaval, entering the Carmelite convent there at the age of 20, not because of any great attraction to the religious life, but because it seemed the most sensible thing to do.

The people unanimously welcomed what Philip preached
(Acts 8:6)



Three things marked her out in her time: She was a woman; she was a contemplative; she was an active reformer.

As a woman she stood on her own two feet, even in the man's world of her time. Beautiful, talented, outgoing, courageous, she was totally human.

She was a woman “for God”, a woman of contemplative prayer and a mystic.

She was a woman “for others”. She spent much of her time and energy seeking, against great opposition at times, to reform herself and the Carmelites. Her new Order of “Discalced Carmelites” (“shoeless” - underlining the commitment to the poor) was approved in 1562, suppressed in 1575, before being finally approved in 1582.

In 1970 the Church gave her the title of “Doctor”, becoming the first woman to hold this honour.

Brian McLaughlin CSSp

Tuesday, October 16 - Saint Gall

One of twelve missionaries who accompanied St Columbanus to Europe. While Columbanus went on to Italy, Gall remained in Switzerland, as a hermit. After his death, an abbey was founded and around it the town of St Gall developed. His contribution and that of his companions was immense. They brought learning and books which were reproduced across Europe. Many of the original texts in Ireland were destroyed by the Vikings but survived in Europe.

For Paul *“in Christ Jesus whether you are circumcised or not makes no difference – what matters is faith that makes its power felt through love.”* For Gentiles taking on circumcision is an unnecessary and harmful burden.

Pharisees concentrated on the tiny external details of religion but forgot the great moral principles – particularly mercy, shown here in alms for the poor.

The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying: “Set out...”
(Acts 8:26)



Homily

- When accused of being two-faced Abraham Lincoln replied: *“If I had two faces would I be wearing this one?”* Behind the humour is the admission that we all like to impress people. It has become an industry.
- “We consciously or subconsciously put forward a better image of ourselves than really exists. The outward appearance of our character and the inner reality... do not match.” C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*.
- This teaching applies to us today as much as it did to the Pharisees in Jesus’ time.
- Jesus often dined with Pharisees. Despite all their faults he interacted with them as he did with everyone, a truly open-hearted person.

Sean Flynn

Wednesday, October 17

Both readings call attention to the truth that what is essential is invisible to the eye. There is more to this world than meets the eye. What pertains to the heart are relationships which are formed and lived, though not always visible. When we attach too much importance to externals and non-essentials we suffocate a relationship. This applies to our relationship with God and to our relationship with each other as a community of believers. The same approach applies to the mission vocation we all share.

Reflection

“One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eye” said the sad Little Prince to the Fox. We have all heard someone say, “I wonder what they see in each other?” That question comes from the speaker who only sees with the eyes whereas the people they refer to are seeing with the heart. The Gospel today focuses on the same universal contrast: inner versus outer, important versus insignificant, concentration on externals and getting lost in unimportant details. Seeing with the eyes, not with the heart.

Jesus, at table with his critics, reminds them that they have lost sight of

*Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are
going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.*

(Mt 21:31)



what ‘God’s wisdom’ reveals to us. In expending too much energy on little things, the Pharisees are incapable of listening to the Word and fulfilling God’s central commands. Their “letter of the law” approach to religious faith and practice impedes peoples’ spiritual journey toward God, even setting up barriers to entering the Kingdom. Jesus’ mission was to place mercy at the heart of his ministry, placing people before rules and regulations.

Our own religious leaders today frequently remind us of ‘core teachings’ thereby expressing their concern with *pure doctrine*. We must be careful against a ‘scribal religious approach’ as Pope Francis warns, elevating teaching and principles before people, whereas Jesus emphasized love as the centre of our relationship with God & neighbor. Attention to the Spirit, trusting and being led by the Spirit (Galatians reading), will safeguard against inessentials and keep us focused on our mission and what is central to our faith practice and witness.

Richard Foran

Thursday, October 18 – St Luke

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him
who brings glad tidings of peace,
bearing good news, announcing salvation!*
(Entrance antiphon)

Today we celebrate the feast of St Luke. Luke was one of the evangelists and also the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. He was one of the companions of Paul on his missionary journey and he was described by Paul as kind and loyal. In his gospel Luke gives us an insight into the healing ministry of Jesus and his love for the poor and oppressed.

The first reading from the second letter to Timothy and the Gospel from Luke speak of the reality and struggles of being on Mission.

Homily

- The first reading is Paul’s testimony at the end of his career in which he talks about his struggles, his faith in the grace of God and his appreciation of the kindness and support of people like Luke on his

Philip proceeded to explain the good news of Jesus to him
(Acts 8:35)



missionary journey.

- In the Gospel, the mission of Jesus is growing and he calls ‘labourers’ to join him in harvesting this growth, giving them some principles to keep in mind as they go from place to place on mission.
- The call to be on mission continues to each person in different ways today. While the missionary will have struggles, he/she is called to focus on the core of the mission, which is proclaiming the kingdom of God by word and by deed.
- Those being missioned to also have a responsibility for the way they respond to the good news that they hear.

Winifred Ojo SSL, Ireland

Friday, October 19

Today’s we commemorate a number of saints, among them eight Jesuit missionaries in North America, mid 1600s, who were tortured and martyred. We pray for missionaries who often face suffering and even death.

First Reading The description of “election” in Ephesians is consistently God-centred. God calls a people “for himself.” God’s “plan” refers to God’s providential direction of **all things in the cosmos**. For Ephesians Creation is a witness to God. The Divine indwells in everything. Holiness is a **way of life** that corresponds to the God revealed in creation.

Homily

- The hypocrite is never genuine; he is always play-acting. The basis of hypocrisy is insincerity.
- God’s care for me is the most detailed of all. To God I am never lost in the crowd.
- The Jews were so impressed with the individual care of God that they said that every blade of grass had its guardian angel. None of us needs to fear, for each can say, “God cares for **me** in a unique

Peter asked the messengers of Cornelius into his house
(cf Acts 10:23)



way”

- In the day of trouble, there need be no fear, for no less a person than the Holy Spirit of God stands by to help. God will sustain me and guide me through the most trying hours. During this mission month of October, we are invited to witness to this good news sincerely, faithfully and courageously.

Irish Missionary in Brazil

Saturday, October 20

One of my favourite feast-days in the life of the Church is Ascension Sunday. It's a beautiful, yet challenging time, when we remember Jesus as He withdraws from his followers and ascends into heaven.

It leaves a big question though, what will we do when he is gone! Thankfully though, Jesus becomes present in another sense, present through our lives, present through and in us, as we become the body of Christ here on earth.

Our reading from Ephesians 1:15-23 is speaking about this body and encouraging us as we live out our lives and the mission of God today, wherever we are as the Church. The writer says, God has made Jesus the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. After the ascension, through our faith in the risen Christ we become the living and active body of Jesus. Faith is what happens inside us that draws us into the body of Jesus, whatever moves us to assemble with others in the church, to join our lives to others for worship. *“Having once heard about your faith,”* writes the author of Ephesians. Faith is the force that keeps you coming back to commune with Jesus, to welcome him with your hands, with your prayers, with your love with your actions. To come to worship is an act of faith, as we hope and pray that God will meet us there, even if God feels absent to us. Even if we're confused about our own motives, God remains faithful.

To be the Church together, in all its diversity, is an act of faith that invites us to experience the world as filled with Christ *“who fills the whole of creation”* with God in whom we live, move, and have our being.

For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself

(EN 15).



Our worship therefore is an invitation into faith as a way of life and the Church invites us to let our faith open up a new world, or the Kingdom, in this world. Not as an escape from reality, but as a way to live out the mission of God and place the love of God at the heart of all things.

Today's section of the letter to the church in Ephesus, reminds us that our faith is the way we experience human love in all of its ordinariness and also the love of God in all of its mysterious depths. Faith is an invitation into a way of life that moves us towards God's mission of true love for the world, that draws us into communion with neighbours and strangers as we reach out together into a very changing culture.

Questions and possible responses:

1. The passage from Ephesians says "*may God enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope His call holds for you*" How does the knowledge that God is a God of hope considers us a change how we view God and live out the mission of God and share this hope with others?
2. How should the knowledge that "*infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers*" encourage us to be Christ's ambassadors in the world today?
3. Spend a few moments in prayer, asking that God would enlighten the eyes of your heart this week, that you might see God more clearly.

Rev. Rob Jones, Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines

29th Sunday, MISSION SUNDAY, October 21

1st reading: The suffering servant points to a Messiah who suffers on our behalf so that we might enjoy relationship with God.

2nd reading: Jesus is presented as one who fully experienced the human condition (shares our lot), and who also bears a special relation with God and has entered into God's presence. This assures us that our approach to God will be met with sympathy and understanding – Jesus has opened for us access to God.

The centurion Cornelius and his whole household were devout and God-fearing
(Act 10:1-2)



Jesus can feel human weakness. Thus we should be confident in approaching Jesus for help. As the ancients expressed it, “he was as we are, and therefore he will help; he was not as we are, and therefore he can.”

This also gives God the quality of mercy. There is no part of human experience of which God cannot say: “I have been there.” When we have a sad and sorry tale to tell, when life has drenched us with tears, we do not go to a God who is incapable of understanding what has happened; we go to a God who has been there. To know all is to forgive all. And that is why God finds it easy to forgive.

Gospel: The action of James and John aroused deep resentment amongst the other ten. The old controversy about who was to be greatest emerged once more.

Jesus responded by demonstrating that although in worldly kingdoms the standard of greatness is power, in the Kingdom of Jesus the standard is service. The test is not, “What service can I extract?”, but, “What service can I deliver?” The repeated struggles for honour among the disciples show what a difficult task this reversal of values is.

Christian discipleship is a service industry in which there should be no unemployment. There is work for everyone.

Notes towards a Homily

Current Global Political (& Social) Climate – Mission focused on Power, Status, Ego

- Current global political climate - obsessed with status, power, ego, insular thinking (Trump, Putin, Brexit...)
- At the social level - a technological culture dominated by self-promotion (selfies, Facebook, Instagram etc.)

An alien coming down to earth today might interpret the human mission to be the achievement of fame, power, and status.

I really understand that God has no favourites
(Acts 10:34)



This is nothing new. In today's Gospel we witness Jesus' Apostles indignant, resentful and vying for honour and status. Competing with each other to see who is the greatest

Christian Mission - focused on Service

Jesus' response to the request of James and John indicates that the Christian mission is very different:

- For Jesus greatness consists, not in domination, but in service.
- Jesus' kingdom is not about who wears the crown, but who bears the cross - like the suffering servant of the first reading.

The Apostles were no Saints - We too are worthy of this Mission

We may think we are too weak for this difficult mission which requires subverting ourselves. The repeated tussles among the Apostles for positions of status and honour demonstrate what a difficult mission this is to live out.

The Twelve were not a company of saints. They were ordinary people.

It was with these ordinary people that Jesus set out to, and succeeded in, changing the world. Ordinary people like us.

Jesus considered his Apostles worthy of Christian mission. And he considers us worthy too.

The Missionary Challenge for each one of us

During this October month of mission, Jesus challenges each one of us, like his Apostles, to the mission of service for others. There is work for every one of us in the fulfillment of this mission.

“To play my part in the Christian mission, what act of service is Jesus calling me or my family to perform – today? – during this October month of mission? – and indeed throughout my life?”

Ronan White

The power of evangelisation will find itself considerably diminished if those who proclaim the Gospel are divided among themselves in all sorts of ways.



PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant The love of Christ gathers us together in communion this Mission Sunday so that we might be renewed in our commitment to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth and so we pray to our loving Father:

1. We pray for Pope Francis and all the bishops of the world, that they will proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with zeal and compassion and without fear.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

2. We pray for all missionaries who live in difficult situations, that they may they never lose heart and always be a sign of hope for those with whom they work.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

3. We pray for those who are suffering today: Lord Jesus, you know our weaknesses and our temptations and you were no stranger to suffering. Strengthen all those who are struggling under heavy burdens. Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

4. We pray for the sick, the lonely, the elderly and for all who are bereaved. May they find comfort in uniting their suffering with the Risen Christ, “who offered himself as a ransom for all.”

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

5. We pray for God’s blessing on our community gathered here and on Christian communities everywhere. May the offering of our prayers and sufferings as well as the support we give World Mission Sunday, help us to fill the earth with God’s love.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Celebrant God of love, you sent your Son among us to be the way the truth and the life. Hear our prayers that we may live our lives imitating his ways of justice, truth and compassion. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

Since you rejected it... here and now we turn to the gentiles
(Acts 13:46)



The Deep End Mission and fullness of life

Each October we celebrate *World Mission* and the month begins with the *Day for Life*. Mission is about promoting life.

Mission defends the weak and the voiceless; people who are overlooked and overburdened. Mission says ‘No’ to the ‘culture of death’ which ignores, discards and terminates the weak, the dependent and the unborn. Mission welcomes every child as a treasure deserving of care and support.

Our Mission is to affirm the incredible holiness of each person. The incredible holiness of each family; to build up one another, by putting fresh hearts into one another, by encouraging each other. “Show affection and concern for one another. Love surmounts even the worst barriers”. AL 140

In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis says that we should seek new forms of missionary creativity (AL 57). In AL 181 he goes on to say “Families should not see themselves as a refuge from society, but instead go forth from their homes in a spirit of solidarity with others. In this way, they become a hub for integrating persons into society and a point of contact between the public and private spheres.” As families can we learn more about the *Society of Missionary Children*? Can our family be a hub for greater engagement with the work and campaigns of Trócaire?

Brian O’Toole CSSp, Spiritan Missionary

...if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.”

(EN 18)



Monday, October 22 – Saint John Paul II

Introduction “The lust of avarice as so totally seized upon mankind that their wealth seems rather to possess them than they possess their wealth.” - *Pliny the Elder* (AD 23–79). A Roman proverb said money is like sea-water: the more you drink, the thirstier you become. Jesus avoids getting involved in a judgement case because he sees avarice at the root of it.

Homily Story from Allan Culpepper.

A Jewish story tells of the good fortune of a hardworking farmer. The Lord appeared to this farmer and granted him three wishes, but with the condition that whatever the Lord did for the farmer would be doubled for his neighbor.

The farmer, scarcely believing his good fortune, wished for a hundred cattle. Immediately he received 100 cattle, and he was overjoyed until he saw that his neighbor had 200.

So he wished for 100 acres of land, and again he was filled with joy until he saw that his neighbor had 200 acres. Rather than celebrating God’s goodness, the farmer could not escape feeling jealous and slighted because his neighbor had received more than he.

Finally, he stated his third wish - that God would blind him in one eye. And God wept.

Michael Hayes

Tuesday, October 23

See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit.

Today’s Gospel is a call to be prepared. There is an air of expectation about it. This call to action is a reminder not to ‘fall asleep’. As a Christians we are called to be active and our relationship with Christ sustains us just as the oil keeps the lamps burning. It is this fire within us, this Christ-lamp, which fuels us and helps us to live as Christians in this world. Keeping a lamp lit in Jesus’ time involved constant attention and watchfulness so that it did not burn out: replenishing the oil and adjusting the wick.

They told how the gentiles had been converted
(Acts 15:3)



During the month of October we celebrate World Mission Month and are invited to be specifically conscious of the Church's missionary activity abroad. We are all called to be missionaries and perhaps we can reflect today on ways in which we should be ready for this task. Missioning, whether abroad or to our families and friends, communities and churches, requires much strength and readiness. If we allow our lamps to burn out, if we are low on fuel then we will not be able to do such tasks. How do you keep your lamps burning? Where do you go to recharge your batteries? Christ is the one who sustains us. Think today about what you do to sustain that relationship with Jesus, that fuel for your lamp. We remember especially those who mission to poorer communities overseas and all who work to empower local communities of faith. This missionary action requires replenishing the oil.

Jane Mellet

Wednesday, October 24

Introduction How ready and willing are we to go outside and beyond of our own narrow world?

Reflection St. Paul belongs in a long tradition of those who have written letters from prison; messages sent from those on the inside to those on the outside. Martin Luther King, for example, famously wrote from prison. Those who are denied their freedom can remind us of significant things in life that we do not see or that we take for granted. St. Paul's message is a radical one: real freedom is to be had in Christ. And he spells this out by saying that, in Christ, God's love is offered to everyone. Love is not limited, or selective, or exclusive.

Faith is recognising and living the good news of this love for everyone. It is an extraordinary insight. St Paul sees his special mission in making this known to the world; and it is now an essential moment in the patrimony of our faith.

Pope Francis says that 'every man and woman is a mission.' Every human encounter is a moment of mission, of going out, and of connection with the other. As we reflect on mission in this month of October, it is, perhaps, good to ask how we might honour St Paul's insight - God's love is offered to everyone - as part of our own journey of faith. How willing



are we to go out to and welcome the other, the stranger, and allow them to share in our journey? Or are we still imprisoned in a narrow view of others, of ourselves, of our world, and of our God?

Fr Michael Conway, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Thursday, October 25

If mission means reaching out and spreading joy, then one Spiritan missionary brought great joy to a twenty-year-old physically and mentally challenged Maasai girl whom I know. She lives in a village outside Arusha, Tanzania. She was born at home prematurely but as she was unable to breast feed she was brought to hospital and put in an incubator where she stayed for 2 months. The parents were then informed that the girl had severe mental and physical challenges.

Such news was devastating in a society where birth abnormalities are seen as a curse from God. However there is now a change of attitude due to the work of missionaries who have devoted their life to supporting physically and mentally challenged youth in tribes like the Maasai. It is best exemplified by an elder who told me that "This child is a human being and deserves to be supported; in the past we did not see the need to help such girls as they were not able to contribute to our way of life."

Through the Spiritan missionary the family met a community health worker who gave her exercises to loosen her limbs. In the eyes of the family the exercises were not of much help as they expected that the exercises would cure her and she would be 'normal' again.

The family was then given a wheelchair but due to the thorny nature of the environment, the wheelchair had regular punctures. The Spiritan then found her a better model of wheelchair that can withstand the thorny environment. The mother told me that her daughter is now able to move around on her wheelchair to visit the neighbours. If it was not for this support her daughter would now be walking around the house on her hands and knees she said.

Eamonn Brehony



Friday, October 26

Today we celebrate brothers St Chad and St Cedd, Anglo Saxon missionaries in the early Christian Church in England. Both were made bishops and were known for their missionary zeal, preaching, life of humility and holiness.

First Reading: Paul, writing from prison, “implores” the Christian community to unity. A sign of Gods Kingdom present in these new communities is unity which is achieved through selfless love, gentleness and patience.

Gospel Reflection: In any bookstore one of the larger sections will surely be on **mindfulness**. In the West, the importance of “living in the present moment,” with books and courses on mindfulness, has become a profitable growth industry for numerous self-help gurus. One of the most popular counseling therapies treating anxiety, depression, and addiction is “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.”

In the East, where I work, mindfulness has long been a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy and practise.

But mindfulness, being mindful and living the present moment to the full, is at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus came so that we might have life and have it to the full and this means living each moment fully - attentive to the love of God, poured into our hearts and into the world.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is warning his listeners about the coming judgement and a lack of attentiveness to the times we are living in, and a lack of urgency to get our relationships with God and one another in order.

The urgent message of Jesus, echoed in Buddhist meditation, is to **wake up**.

Wake up and be attentive to our new life in Christ and the invitation to reconciliation.

May this Eucharist, the great sacrament of communion, unity and reconciliation give us the wisdom and courage to be reconciled with God and those in our lives with whom we need to be reconciled. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.

Sean O’Leary CSSp, Taiwan.

At this mention of rising from the dead some of them burst out laughing
(Acts 17:32)



Saturday, October 27

Ephesians 4:7-16 God has distributed gifts to all members of the church “so that the saints together may make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ.”

Homily

Alleluia verse summarises today’s Gospel: “I take pleasure, not in the death of a wicked man, says the Lord, but in the turning back of a wicked man who changes his ways to win life.” There was and still is a belief that if people suffer illness, accident or business collapse they are being punished for wrong they do. One comforter said to Job: “Who that was innocent ever perished?” (Job 4:7). Jesus refutes this, giving two examples, those Pilate had slaughtered in the Temple and the eight on whom the tower fell, saying they were no worse sinners than anyone else.

The fig tree drew sustenance from the soil; in return, it produced nothing. It was a parasite. Yet it received one more year.

The apostles are examples of “second-chancers,” - as we all are.

Need for repentance – “unless you repent you will all perish as they did;” the fig tree’s deadline was extended, not canceled – “if not, then you can cut it down.”

John Maloney

30th Sunday of the Year Sunday, October 28

Introduction to the celebration: Why is *Amazing Grace* such a popular song? The tune *is* good but the words speak to our human experience, being lost and blind, unable to see our way. The Gospel prayer of Bartimaeus is ours: Let me see again!

Jeremiah 31:7-9: Our Old Testament reading is full of hope and confidence, against a background of catastrophic failure. The prayer in v. 7 is really answered in vv. 8 and 9. Perhaps our temptation today is to think of God as remote, beyond relationship. In this reading, using the imagery of parenthood, we see how close our God is to us all and how breathtakingly near we all are to our God.

It is all God’s work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ

(2 Cor 5:18)



Hebrews 5:1-6: The Letter to the Hebrews reflects on the great question: how did God come to our help in Jesus? The answer is encouraging: by entering fully into our condition of being human. This is all the more astonishing because of who Jesus was, the very Son of God (“the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being”). The teaching is very appealing: he can help us precisely because he is one of us.

Mark 10:46-52: The story of Bartimaeus, apparently incidental, forms a vital part of Mark’s teaching on discipleship (Mark 8:22-10:52). Two things may help us hear this reading. First of all, it is not easy to insist against the pressure of others who would prefer us to shut up. Secondly, having the courage to name our own urgent need is a key to becoming a disciple, to following Jesus on The Way.

Homily “*We also believe, therefore we also speak.*” (2 Cor 4:13)

The pressure on Bartimaeus to shut up can help us name our own situation of faith today. As believers, we often find ourselves under enormous pressure not only to be silent about the faith but even to give it up altogether. Such antagonism is paradoxically a grace.

It is a grace for the individual believer, who is really obliged to figure out her or his own faith — why do I really believe and why and how does it matter. Even more importantly, what do I do to make the Gospel come alive in my own life?

It is also a grace for the community. How do we, as a community, invite others to the table of the faith? This is not really an optional extra. Pope Francis puts it well: “*What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known?*” (*Joy of the Gospel* §264) With disarming simplicity, St Paul writes, “*We also believe, therefore we also speak.*” (2 Corinthians 4:13) There can be no hoarding of faith, even in some kind of holy huddle!

The wider culture invites us to sleepwalk through life — to be satisfied not with more but with less (distractions, busyness, consumerism). The

So we are ambassadors for Christ

(2 Cor 5:20)



Gospel message is wake up call. With due respect to Socrates, the un-lived life is not worth examining! At least, Bartimaeus knows that he is a blind beggar.

The *Late Fragment* by Raymond Carver can touch a nerve:

And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.”

The “even so” is quietly explosive.

Kieran J. O’Mahony, OSA.

*Kieran is co-ordinator of biblical studies in the diocese of Dublin (www.tarsus.ie).
His most recent book is “Speaking from Within. Biblical Approaches for Effective Preaching” (Veritas).*

Prayers of the Faithful

Celebrant: As we come to the final Sunday of Mission Month we present our prayers to our Father who sent his only Son among us that we may have life and have it to the full.

1. We pray that the Church, under the guidance of Pope Francis, may have the spirit of mission: that our faith may be an example and an invitation to others to come to know the God who made them and loves them.

Lord, hear us

2. We pray for unity among Christians: that the division among Christians may not be a source of scandal and an obstacle preventing people coming to Christ.

Lord, hear us

3. We pray that all may have greater respect for the earth’s natural resources: that we may use all of God’s creation responsibly and

They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd

(Jn 10:16)



wisely and for the benefit of all.

Lord, hear us

4. We pray for missionaries, that they dedicate themselves fully to the spread of the Gospel and that God may keep them safe from all harm.

Lord, hear us

5. We pray that God may inspire people to devote themselves to the spread of the Gospel, both in word and in deed.

Lord, hear us

6. We pray for those who care for the blind, the deaf, the dumb, for all who need special care: that through their skill and dedication, those whom they care for will benefit greatly.

Lord, hear us

Celebrant: Father, as you healed the blind beggar, heal us also and open our eyes and hearts to those around us. We ask these and all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

The Deep End “Rabbi, I want to see”

I had the privilege of living in Ethiopia from 1980 until 1999 and thirteen of these years I spent with the Hamar people. From time to time Dr. Rudolph, an ophthalmic surgeon from Germany would spend some weeks with us treating people’s blindness, trachoma and vitamin A deficiency. I was the one translating for him and I saw how simple procedures brought people to sight. I had entered a whole new world of miracles. It was an experience of wonder; the mystery of the human eye and the joy of seeing.

We rejoice and thank God for the gift of our sight. But do we not sometimes or often limit our vision by wearing ‘blinkers’ or by having ‘blind spots’. We blinker ourselves by seeing selectively; maybe by keeping disadvantaged people at a distance, ‘at arm’s length’. Having a blind spot is when we fail to see things from the point of view of the ‘other person’. Seeing clearly is about being shocked by another’s need.

*At Caesarea we called on Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven
(cf Acts 21:9)*



As families mostly we are not called to heroic daring feats or spectacular deeds but we are called to ordinary kindness that we are all capable of if we care. Hamar people describe a mature adult as one “who has his heart in his eyes”. A person that has a heart that sees what action is needed.

Brian O’Toole CSSp, Spiritan Missionary

Monday, October 29

In the first reading we are called on to be friends with one another, to be kind, compassionate, forgiving each other as God has forgiven us in Christ, loving one another as Christ has loved us.

The Gospel shows us Jesus the evangeliser being the Good News from God for the woman who was bent double. She was probably cared for by the community and had some share in its worship, but still lacked the full dignity and freedom that human beings ought to enjoy.

In the synagogue she was probably taken for granted. Yet Jesus notices her, acknowledges her as a daughter of Abraham. Jesus invites her to come to meet him and says: “Woman, be rid of your infirmity.” She was one of the downtrodden and oppressed Jesus had in mind when he announced in another synagogue that his mission was to set the downtrodden free and proclaim liberty to those oppressed. Now he fulfils what he set out to do, he sets her free. What he announced some time earlier is now a reality.

Is there any message for us in the discussion between Jesus and the synagogue official about healing on the Sabbath? The official objects to healing on the Sabbath not because he doesn’t want the woman healed, but it is not the time to do it. He is saying what is often said even in church circles: “we don’t do it that way.” He was probably a very good man, but stuck in the traditions of the past. Jesus doesn’t rebuke him but engages in the customary mode of discussion of the rabbis to make his point. Pope Francis invites Christians to abandon the complacent attitude which says: “We have always done it that way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in rethinking, the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation in their respective communities” (Evangelii Gaudium 33)

Patrick J Ryan CSSp

If you want peace, work for Justice
(Pope Paul VI, 1972)

**Tuesday, October 30**

In today's Eucharist we will hear from Luke (13:18-21) where Jesus likens the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed. From the simple act of scattering seed in a garden, the seed grew into a tree, stretching its branches into the skies to shelter birds, creatures and perhaps even the one's own descendants underneath it. This sower may have never even known how the seed flourished.

As Mission Month draws to an end, we remember the many missionaries who have spent their lives abroad serving the poor. We pray for the souls of those who are no longer with us, and consider that they may have never seen the fruits of the seeds that they spent their life's work sowing.

Tiny seeds scattered by the followers of Christ have potential to bring about the Kingdom of God. Although *you* may not be a missionary travelling to foreign parts, you can still be aware of where you may be sowing the seeds of faith, belief and awareness of the presence of Christ around you today. Perhaps with your younger family members through giving them the example of your Christian living; or perhaps within your community by being a good neighbour; or perhaps through quiet works of kindness with strangers...

All of us, through our baptism, are called to be missionaries in our own garden, sowing seeds and seeking to cultivate the Kingdom of God.

Mary Anne Stokes, Vincentian Lay Missionary

Inter-religious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission
(Redemptoris Missio 55)



Wednesday, October 31

Ephesians 6:1-9: Can sound awkward to us today. But then it was very positive in that it actually mentioned slaves and women. Men, women, slaves are all part of Christ's family. The advice can also be seen to have been strategic - many converts were in vulnerable situations and no point in attracting unnecessary and unwelcome attention by misbehaving.

Homily

- Shockingly, the door is narrow and many will not get in;
- Secondly, it will be closed *“and you may find yourself knocking on the door”* (“Knock and it shall be opened to you!”);
- Thirdly, people *“from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God”*.
- Complacency, overconfidence and presumption can be deadly – *“Security is mortals’ chiefest enemy”* (Macbeth). Many a sports person will corroborate this!
- *“We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets.”* – “Pull”, or “who-you-know” won’t work!

Live as though admission to the kingdom depended entirely on your own doing, but knowing that you depend entirely on God’s grace.
Entrance antiphon: *“Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice; turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face.”*

Noel Murray

*The commitment of the laity
to the work of evangelisation is changing ecclesial life,
while particular churches are more willing to meet with the members
of other Christian churches and other religions,
and to enter into dialogue and cooperation with them.
Above all, there is a new awareness that
missionary activity is a matter for all Christians,
for all dioceses and parishes, Church institutions and associations.
(Redemptoris Missio 2)*

