

## **World Mission Sunday 2023**

### ***“Hearts on Fire, feet on the move”***

Dear brothers and sisters,

The early Christians had a deep love and connection with one another. This is clear from the second reading where we heard the beautiful message from St Paul and his companions, Sylvanus and Timothy, to the Christian community in Thessalonica. Not only did each community pray for all the other Christian communities but they also supported one another financially when one of the communities was in need. That tradition has continued in the Church for the past 2000 years.

Faith is something I share with millions of people just like me throughout the world. Faith is never just personal. Nor is the Church just my parish or my diocese or my country. We are part of something bigger than ourselves, something which connects us across space and time. When we receive the Eucharist, we are united to all those celebrating the Mass in every corner of the globe. In the moment we receive Holy Communion, we are even intimately united with all those who have ever received it in the past and all those who will receive it in the future.

We find this in the theme Pope Francis has chosen for World Mission Sunday this year: ‘Hearts on fire, feet on the move’. It is in the Word and the Eucharist that we receive the gift of that connection among us. The Holy Father’s theme recalls the episode when the Risen Christ walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They are downcast and sad after Jesus’ death on the cross. But Jesus mysteriously appears and walks the path with them. He comforts them, inspires them and then reveals himself in the breaking of bread. At that moment he disappears because he has now become the bread, the food for the journey for these two disciples which enables them to return to the community in Jerusalem.

World Mission Sunday is the day we acknowledge our connectedness to all the other members of the Church. As we listen to the Word and celebrate the Eucharist, wherever we are on the planet, we do so as one family. We pray for one another and offer support to those communities which need our practical help. Our prayers and donations on Mission Sunday, therefore, are a witness to the fact that the Church is a family, a family where we look after one another.

This year Missio Scotland hopes to fund many different projects in mission countries, but we wish to draw special attention to some projects in Sri Lanka.

Two of the projects are run by the Comboni Sisters in the tea plantations in the Diocese of Kandy, one of the poorest areas of the country. The first project will provide basic education for children living in the remote tea plantation villages and the second project will provide food to school children.

We are also appealing for funds to help the Catholics of Sri Lanka build their own national shrine, for a parish community to build a parish hall and to provide sewing machines to women who are single parents so that they can earn an income to help raise their children.

You can read more about these in the Missio Scotland magazine or on our website.

World Mission Sunday is celebrated in every parish in every country throughout the world on this day. It is a moment when we acknowledge our unity as Catholics worldwide who are bonded to Christ and bearing witness to him.

Missio – the Pontifical Mission Societies – is the Holy Father’s official charity to help the Church where it is poor, small or just getting started.

Today, Pope Francis asks each of us to be generous with our prayers and donations for communities in mission countries which need our support and he wishes to thank you for your support over the years.

Wishing you and your parish the unity and joy of God.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

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