

World Mission Sunday - 18th October 2026

“One in Christ – United in Mission”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today the Catholic Church throughout the world celebrates World Mission Sunday, and this year our celebration is especially significant. We mark the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday, established by Pope Pius XI in 1926. For one hundred years, Catholics have set aside this day to pray and give generously for the Church in mission countries.

We are united in Christ, not just throughout the world today, but also across time. All the generations – our parents and grandparents, our great-grandparents, we ourselves and perhaps our children and grandchildren – have prayed together on this day and helped the young Church in distant lands.

That unity is at the heart of the theme Pope Leo XIV has chosen for this centenary year: “One in Christ – United in Mission” which reminds us that mission begins with Christ Himself. United with Him, we become united with one another and then we share in His mission of bringing faith, hope and love to the world.

In his message for today he tells us: "This requires hearts united in Christ, reconciled communities and, in everyone, a willingness to cooperate with generosity and trust." He goes on to encourage the whole Church, following the Jubilee Year, "to continue its missionary journey with joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit."

We are brothers and sisters, a family bound together across every continent, and what happens to the Church in Albania or in Ukraine happens, in a real sense, to us. When one part of the family suffers, we all suffer; when one part is in need, we are all called to respond.

The readings at Mass this Sunday connect intimately with this theme.

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah tells us that God called Cyrus, a foreign king who did not even know him, to carry out his purposes: "I have called you by your name, I have given you a title, though you do not know me" (Isaiah 45:4). God works through people and nations far beyond the boundaries we might expect, reminding us that his mission belongs to the whole world, not to any one people or place.

In the Gospel, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus with a question about paying taxes to Caesar, and he replies, "Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Matthew 22:21). Our first duty, before every other, is what we owe to God. On World Mission Sunday, giving to God what belongs to God's means placing our prayer, our resources and our very selves at the service of his mission in the world.

Today every Catholic parish in Scotland takes up the annual collection to support parish communities which lack the resources to carry out their pastoral and charitable work. Your generosity helps bishops, priests, religious sisters, catechists and the people they serve, more often than not in difficult circumstances.

Important though today's collection is, I ask something equally important: please pray. Pray for missionaries, for priests and religious, for catechists and lay leaders, and for families living through poverty, persecution or war. Prayer is the first act of mission. Our financial gifts support the Church's work; our prayers sustain its heart.

As part of this year's campaign, Missio Scotland is highlighting the work of the Church in two countries in particular need of our support: Albania and Ukraine.

In Albania, we are supporting two projects. The first is a day centre run by Franciscan Sisters, who offer care and education to children and young people affected by poverty, difficult family situations and the lack of access to education.

One of the sisters, Sr Lulë, told us:

"One of the biggest challenges we have faced here at the centre is the heating system. The building needs investment, but there has never been enough funding available to do everything that is needed, so Missio Scotland supporting the installation of a new heating system is a gift from God."

The second Albanian project, led by Fr Augustin, a Vincentian Father and National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Albania, provides support to homeless men who have nowhere else to turn.

In Ukraine, we are supporting the purchase of an electricity generator for a Catholic centre in the city of Kharkiv, close to the front line of the war. During the bombings when frequently there is no power, the generator will provide electricity and heating so the centre can continue welcoming people seeking food, warmth and shelter. It will be a practical sign of Christ's hope amid conflict.

You can read more about these projects in our magazine, copies of which are available.

On behalf of Pope Leo, I thank you sincerely for your faithful support over many years. The generosity of the Catholics of Scotland has strengthened the Church in countless communities throughout the world. Although you may never meet those whose lives you have touched, they remember you in their prayers.

On this 100th World Mission Sunday, I ask you to please continue to remember the Church in mission countries in your daily prayers and, if you are able, to give generously to today's collection. Together, through our prayers and generosity, we proclaim that we truly are "One in Christ – United in Mission."

Thank you, and may God bless our families, our parishes and the Church across the globe.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Vincent Lockhart". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Fr.", "Vincent", and "Lockhart" being capitalized and prominent.

Fr Vincent Lockhart

National Director of Missio Scotland – The Pontifical Mission Societies