

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

21 OCTOBER 2018

Suggested Homily Notes & Intercessions

Sunday 21 October 2018
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Ethiopia

Together we can build a future of hope

First Reading: Isaiah 53:10-11

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

Jesus said, 'Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all.'

The formidable task of the preacher on this World Mission Sunday is to help God's people reflect upon the urgency of *missio ad gentes*. Our mission to the nations, the mandate for which comes directly from Jesus Christ, is as vitally important now as it was over two thousand years ago.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus sends us out to share his Gospel with those who have never encountered it, with the purpose of bringing them into the embrace of the compassionate and all loving Father.

The word 'mission' can be as contentious as it is confusing. Romantic images of well-intentioned missionaries forging their way through uncharted terrain, braving every danger, in order to convert isolated peoples to Christ have not completely disappeared from people's minds.

Furthermore, some good people challenge the need for mission abroad, citing the need for mission here as more important. Others view mission as an unwelcome interference with other peoples' traditional ways of life.

Our message is clear and beautifully expressed by Pope Francis: 'The first proclamation must ring out over and over. Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.' (*Evangelii Gaudium* 164).

So how do we approach the nations with this message of salvation? The readings today shed light on this, illuminating both our minds and hearts.

The Gospel can only be effective when it is shared with respect and humility, in the service of others, especially those in greatest need of God's grace. The power of the Gospel is God's love offering life to humanity, life in abundance. The primacy of service over power is central to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the hallmark of his own ministry. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve.

On my recent visit to the young Catholic Church in Ethiopia, I had the privilege of meeting Sr Karlo, a Little Sister of Jesus who is serving the Menja people in Wush Wush.

Committed to living among the marginalised, Sr Karlo spoke of how everyone looks down upon the Menja people as poor, uneducated and socially 'untouchable'.

'We Sisters live among them and proclaim the Gospel by our living. We invite them to our house and welcome them as friends. They are not recognised as human beings by the people here. We offer them friendship. Friendship is our context for evangelisation,' Sr Karlo told me.

She went on to say, 'I find Jesus in them. They are innocent and kind people. They share what they have with us and accept us as we are. I find inner joy when I share in their suffering. They have a lot to teach us; they are the ones who will decide about following Jesus. We are here only to show the power of his love, and they know we love them.'

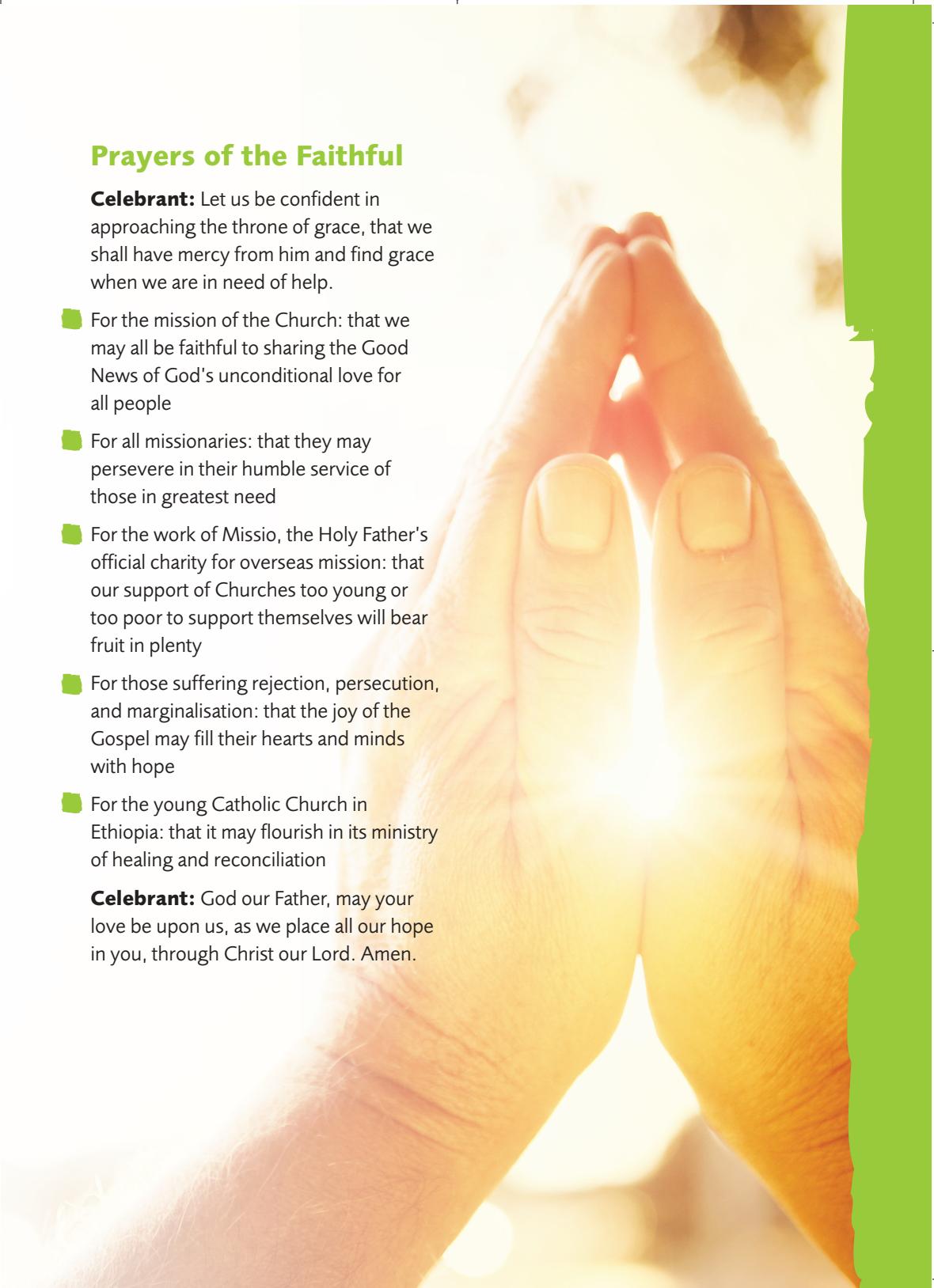
Sr Karlo, and indeed many men and women across the world, choose to leave the comfort and security of their own homes, in order to reach out across cultural and geographical boundaries to those who do not know Christ. They offer hope to many, like the Menja people. Our mission is a mission of hope. The response to the psalm can be our prayer for this World Mission Sunday – **may God's love be upon us, as we place all our hope in you.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Celebrant: Let us be confident in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

- For the mission of the Church: that we may all be faithful to sharing the Good News of God's unconditional love for all people
- For all missionaries: that they may persevere in their humble service of those in greatest need
- For the work of Missio, the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission: that our support of Churches too young or too poor to support themselves will bear fruit in plenty
- For those suffering rejection, persecution, and marginalisation: that the joy of the Gospel may fill their hearts and minds with hope
- For the young Catholic Church in Ethiopia: that it may flourish in its ministry of healing and reconciliation

Celebrant: God our Father, may your love be upon us, as we place all our hope in you, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Quotes from Popes on Mission

'May the world of our time be enabled to receive good news not from evangelisers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ.'

Pope Paul VI

'There can be no true evangelisation without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord.'

St John Paul II

'Being a 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.'

Pope Benedict XVI

'Evangelisation is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. All of them have the right to receive the Gospel.'

Pope Francis

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Missio is the Pope's official charity for overseas mission



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