

*Below is a brief talk (approx. 3:30 min.) that could be read out by you, or another representative of Missio, at all Masses on or before the weekend of World Mission Sunday, 24 October 2021.*

Good morning/evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'd like to speak to you about today's celebration of World Mission Sunday. This special day gives us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of how each one of us is called to mission and how we, as a parish, answer the call to support the mission of our Church throughout the world.

The World Mission Sunday collection, coordinated by Missio, the Holy Father's charity for world mission, is crucial for communities around the world who are suffering through situations of poverty, violence and oppression. The theme the Pope has chosen for this year is from Acts 4:20: *'We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard'*.

We are here together as a community, to share our faith and support one another through what continues to be a challenging time. Just like us, communities around the world are gathering together to celebrate World Mission Sunday too. It may be in the beauty of an ancient church or in the shade of a Baobab tree; it may be in a Cathedral or in a temporary shelter with a tin roof.

Wherever our sisters and brothers are gathered, they are supporting each other in their faith. They are praying for one another and for us. And just like us, they are experiencing the love of Jesus Christ.

One such community, which is gathered in Nigeria, really needs our prayers and support this year.

Intense violence continues to rock communities in Nigeria, with fatalities, mutilations, and destruction of property devastatingly commonplace. The violence is essentially caused by poverty, and historical religious tension is easily manipulated to encourage division and mistrust.

In the midst of all the fear and destruction, there is a group of women who will not give up hope.

The Women's Interfaith Council was established in Kaduna, northern Nigeria, by the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles in 2010. Through the Council women of different faiths work together to build peace through training programmes, which empower women and contribute to healing and reconciliation in their community.

Sister Veronica, who has been leading the Women's Interfaith Council since 2019, is pictured on the World Mission Sunday poster and Gift Aid envelope together with Rachel and her daughter [*hold up a Gift Aid envelope and/or poster*]. Rachel's family was attacked in their village by suspected militant Fulani herdsmen – a semi-nomadic ethnic group living across west and central Africa. Rachel's son was killed and her left arm was cut off below her elbow.

Today, with the support of Sister Veronica and the Women's Interfaith Council, Rachel is rebuilding her life and attempting to heal through forgiveness. She shares: *'When thinking about those who killed my son, I pray for them: "May God forgive them because they don't know what they have done."*

Sister Veronica tells us: *'When you train a woman, you train a nation. We bring them together as women and build peace. Every religion talks about love, there is no religion that talks about war'*.

This World Mission Sunday please hold Sister Veronica, Rachel and her daughter in your prayers, and give generously to the collection. The Gift Aid envelopes include different ways to give, including online. Your support will help missionaries, like Sister Veronica, who work so hard to make sure that as many people as possible hear the Good News that God loves us, and calls us all to be peacemakers.

As the World Mission Sunday prayer says: **'Peace starts with me!'**

**Thank you!**

[If you have time, please share the WMS prayer that was sent to you with *Mission Today*]