



My Dear Parishioners,

In addition to being the Month of the Rosary and Respect Life, October is the month of the Missions. And this year, to mark the Anniversary of a Church Document on the Missions, Pope Francis has set aside this month as an **Extraordinary Missionary Month**. Often times, when we hear of “the missions”, we might think first of the poor, those in other countries or places of great need. And while missions certainly refer to those realities, Mission is first and foremost a command, an identity, something with which we are entrusted. The Church, herself, is Missionary... founded by Christ, entrusted with the Gospel, she is sent to proclaim the Good News. Those who remember the Latin Mass, might remember the final command of the Mass, “*Ite Missa Est*”... that translates literally as “Go. Is sent”. So Mission is at the heart of the Gospel, the heart of Christ and the heart of every Christian. Sent by the Father, Jesus sends His Church and we, as Church, are to respond to that reality. We are sent.

The missionary nature of the Church is both consoling and terrifying. Consoling, because we have been given a Word to share, we have been loved. Terrifying, because we have a duty now to share that Word in an ever more hostile world. But knowing that we are sent together, that we are in communion with the One who sends us and that He is awaiting our return...well that is the joy of the Christian Life. I close with some words of Pope Francis about this special month.

Peace,

Fr. Rogers

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Pope Francis on the Extraordinary Mission Month, October 2019:

Celebrating this month will help us first to rediscover the missionary dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ, a faith graciously bestowed on us in baptism. Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life. This divine life is not a product for sale – we do not practice proselytism – but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission. We received this gift freely and we share it freely (cf. *Mt 10:8*), without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation (cf. *1 Tim 2:4*; *Lumen Gentium*, 48).

The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God’s own eyes and heart. Hope opens us up to the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share. Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth (cf. *Mic 5:4*; *Mt 28:19*; *Acts 1:8*; *Rom 10:18*) A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion. How many saints, how many men and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness, this going forth in mercy, is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness (cf. *2 Cor 5:14-21*)! The man who preaches God must be a man of God (cf. *Maximum Illud*).

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God’s love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God’s love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life (cf. *Eph 1:3-6*).