

Good morning/evening. My name is _____ and I'm pleased to speak with you about today's celebration of World Mission Sunday.

'You shall be my witnesses' is this year's theme and challenge chosen by Pope Francis. On World Mission Sunday, every Catholic community, in every country, sends a powerful message of faith, hope and love. We come together as a parish community in prayer and solidarity with the Global Catholic community and explore how **we** bear witness to God's love.

All Mass collections worldwide and every single donation on World Mission Sunday supports churches, hospitals, schools and vocations in countries where the Church is new, young or poor. The collection, coordinated by Missio – the Pope's charity for world mission – brings the Church together in compassion and communion, providing mission dioceses with the essential support they need to become self-sufficient: local church directly helping local church!

This year we are highlighting the powerful witness of faith, hope and love in Ethiopia. It is a country well-known for the suffering it has experienced through intense famine and desperate poverty. Sadly, our sisters and brothers continue to need our support.

The Kidist Mariam Centre in the Ethiopian town of Meki, provides a safe, supportive, and educational environment for vulnerable women just like Sara, pictured with her daughter on our World Mission Sunday poster and donation envelope [*hold up an envelope and/or poster*]. The Kidist Mariam Centre has seen nearly 3,000 women complete training courses and build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

I would like to tell you about Beth whose life has been completely transformed by the Centre. She needed to support her mother, sister and brother by travelling to another country as a domestic worker. Unfortunately, when she went overseas the families were not kind to her, and she suffered years of abuse. After returning to her homeland, she was introduced to a local Catholic priest who encouraged Beth to seek assistance through the Kidist Mariam Centre.

Maria – a Spanish lay missionary and Director of the Centre – remembers when she first met Beth: 'She came to our Centre to get advice. We started employing her as a cleaner because she needed some immediate help to support her family. And little by little she developed an interest in becoming a food preparation student. We have a project in the rural area with women raising goats to produce milk. And Beth is the one in charge of preparing goat's cheese. It's most impressive that she's so happy now, she's so self-confident. And she's even taught many other people.'

Beth's faith has been a beacon through some of her darkest moments. And in sharing her faith, witnessing to her experiences of Christ's mercy and healing, Beth is helping other women at the Centre. She says, 'I believe that God is always before you and behind you in all your troubles... He is prominent for a person like me, who has fallen in life. God is my life and my everything.'

Beth is very grateful for the care she has been receiving from the Centre, which would not be possible without the faithful support of people like you through the international Missio network and World Mission Sunday donations.

We know that we are all facing many challenges this year. Anything you are able to give will be so gratefully received. The Gift Aid envelopes include different ways to give, including online and by credit and debit cards.

This World Mission Sunday please hold Beth, and all those who live out that call to be witnesses by supporting women just like her, in prayer.

Thank you!