

Below is a brief talk (approx. 4:20 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, 20 October 2024.

Good morning/evening everyone, and thank you, Father, for the opportunity to speak with you all.

Today is not just any Sunday (or Saturday!); it's a day that unites Catholics in every parish and every country. From the remote villages of Malawi to the rugged landscapes of Mongolia, faith communities like ours are gathering to celebrate, pray, and share whatever they can with our brothers and sisters in need. We stand united with them in prayer, solidarity, and action.

This World Mission Sunday, Pope Francis reminds us of Christ's call to each one of us to 'go and invite everyone to the banquet'*. And when he says 'everyone', he means '**everyone**'. Our mission is to be instruments of God's love, to share the Gospel; and our mission is not just local – it's global.

Missio is the Pope's charity for world mission, and he has entrusted the global Missio network with coordinating the World Mission Sunday celebration. Missio ensures that today's offerings — and those collected in parishes worldwide — reach communities in the greatest need. These are places where poverty, conflict, or the challenges of being a young Church, create profound needs. Your generosity will help faith communities build their own chapels, fund hospitals and schools, and support vocations where the Church is just beginning to take root or is struggling to survive.

Let me share a couple of examples of how your support really makes a difference. Missionaries working in areas of conflict are challenged each day **to be**, and **to share**, the love, compassion, and hope of Christ for all people. In Lebanon, where families live under the constant threat of rockets and gunfire, Sr Jovanna and her fellow Sisters are staying with the people they serve. She explains, 'Our aim is to share love and care with families in real need. As long as we have food, we will share it and do everything we can to support them, preserving their dignity and hope.'

Fr Roupheal, the Missio National Director in Lebanon, has asked for our prayers for peace, for the people of Lebanon, and the whole Middle East. He tells us, '*churches and schools are opening to welcome the displaced, and there are many individual initiatives of solidarity with Christians and Muslims.*'

In Mongolia, home to the youngest Catholic Church in the world, the harsh winters can decimate the crops and herds the nomadic people rely on for survival. Missionaries there offer shelter, food, and hope to those who have lost everything, whilst quietly sharing their faith. With your help, Missio has also played a key role in training lay catechists and the first Mongolian Priest, who, alongside missionaries from around the world, provide education, healthcare, and spiritual formation. They are inviting everyone to know God's love.

World Mission Sunday is a lifeline for thousands of missionaries, like those in Lebanon and Mongolia, who bring Christ's love to some of the most challenging places in our world. **These missionaries are often the first to respond in times of crisis and the last to leave the communities they serve.** This is true in Lebanon and, sadly, many other countries at this time. Let us do all that we can to support them as we share in God's mission to build a world of justice, peace, and solidarity.

The essence of **mission** is to go out and invite others to share in the joy and hope we receive through Christ's Resurrection. This hope isn't just for us; it is meant to be shared with the whole world. As Pope Francis reminds us, the heart of our mission is to spread the Good News of God's love, which has the power to transform lives and heal our world.

As we gather around the Eucharistic table today, let us remember that the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the special guests at God's banquet. Together, let's respond to Christ's call to 'Go and invite everyone to the banquet.' Let's be the light and hope our world desperately needs, bearing witness to the love of Christ in all that we do. Please pray for our sisters and brothers and for the work of missionaries throughout the world. And if you can, please donate today using the Missio envelopes or online at **missio.org.uk**

Thank you for your generosity, your prayers, and your commitment to God's global family.

*cf Matthew 22:9