

Good morning/evening everyone and thank you, Father, for the opportunity to speak with you all. Today, people in every Catholic parish around the world are gathering to celebrate World Mission Sunday. We stand united in prayer and solidarity with our sisters and brothers in need, as together we strive to **make God's love more visible in the world.**

In January this year, Pope Francis chose *'Missionaries Of Hope Among All Peoples'* as the theme for this year's World Mission Sunday, reminding us of our calling to be 'messengers and builders of hope' in this Jubilee Year. Hope which, rooted in the resurrection of Christ, has the power to transform lives and heal our world.

Your generous donations, coordinated by Missio, will help missionaries and faith communities bring lasting change – whether it's helping to build a simple chapel, providing vital healthcare to mothers and babies, setting up a school for disadvantaged children or supporting vocations where the Church is just beginning to take root or is struggling to survive.

One of the places your support will make a huge difference is Myanmar, where people are suffering under a brutal dictatorship.

For the past four years, the people of Myanmar have been enduring such violence that many have given up hope of ever going back to a 'normal' life. Villages and churches are being bombed, schools and hospitals destroyed, families forced to flee. Amid all this chaos, the Church is doing its very best to respond.

Father Stephen, National Director of Missio in Myanmar, recently told us: 'Priests and Religious Sisters are living alongside the people in refugee camps, offering food, medicine, education – and hope. Despite having very limited resources themselves, they are doing all they can.'

At Saint Joseph Camp in Mandalay, Sister Regina of the Good Shepherd Sisters cares for over 500 people. She explains: 'We try to provide hope by just being with them, listening to them and telling them "I am with you, you are not alone". Many are suffering from fear, anxiety, uncertainty about what the future holds. But despite all this, some say, "We will go home, even if we don't have a house, we will build a small hut and share together what we have".'

Sr Regina insists: 'We will never give up. We will strive for a better life for our poor people who have suffered so much.'

Father Stephen adds: 'The presence of Priests and Religious among the displaced is a true source of hope. But to be truly effective messengers of hope, they too need support – our prayers and our practical help.'

World Mission Sunday is a lifeline for thousands of missionaries, like Father Stephen and Sister Regina in Myanmar, 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.

In Myanmar, as in many other countries, the presence of missionaries is a symbol of hope: that in the face of the evils of our age – war, poverty and injustice – God's goodness will prevail.

Please pray for our sisters and brothers, and for the work of missionaries throughout the world. And if you can, please donate today to our second collection using the Missio envelopes, *<please hold up the envelope>* parish contactless device or online at missio.org.uk

Let us do all that we can to support them, as we share in God's mission and respond to Pope Leo's call for us to be 'a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world'.

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