

Holy Hour Reflection

‘One in Christ, united in mission’ Pope Leo XIV

This year the Pontifical Mission Societies (known as Missio) are celebrating the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday. The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV is ‘One in Christ, united in mission’, inspired by John 17:17-23.

As we come into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, let us reflect on how we are united in Christ with one mission. Every one of us is called to this mission.

We call to mind the Mission Rosary, our beautiful way to pray for the Church and the world. We give thanks for the unique strengths and contributions of every continent; and the diverse and rich abundance of faith across so many different cultures which makes our global Church a strong and vibrant family.

‘Missionary unity should not be understood as uniformity, but rather as the convergence of different charisms for the same purpose, namely to make Christ’s love visible and to invite everyone to encounter him.’ – Pope Leo XIV, Message for the 100th World Mission Day 2026

Exposition

[As the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, an appropriate hymn may be sung]

Suggested hymns:

- *O Sacrament Most Holy*
- *Be Still for the Presence of the Lord*
- *Here I Am, Lord*

Leader:

Lord Jesus, present here in the Blessed Sacrament, we come before you tonight as your Church – spread across every continent, yet gathered as one body around this one altar. A hundred years ago, Pope Pius XI asked every parish in the world to come together in prayer and sacrifice for the missions. Today we gather not only to remember that day, but to renew the unity from which all mission flows: unity with you, and through you, with one another.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Father, you sent your Son into the world and your Son sends us. Grant that as we adore him here, veiled in the Sacrament of the Altar, we may be drawn ever deeper into the communion he prayed for on the night before he died. Make us one, as he and you are one, so that the world, seeing our unity, may come to believe. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Scripture Reading – John 17:17-23

[A reader may proclaim the text or it may be read in silence]

Jesus said: ‘Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

‘I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.’

[A period of silent adoration may follow]

Reflection

The prayer of Jesus, prayed on the eve of his Passion, is the deepest root of everything we mean when we speak of ‘mission.’ He prays for unity. ‘That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.’ And not just for the followers and friends he has with him in that moment, but for all of us, throughout every age. Knowing how deeply we

would need each other after his death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus sought to unite all of us into a worldwide, eternal family of faith.

Only after asking for that oneness does he speak of the world coming to believe. Unity is not a happy side-effect of mission; in Christ's own prayer, it is the very condition for mission to bear fruit.

On this 100th year of World Mission Sunday, Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme: 'One in Christ, united in mission.' It echoes his own episcopal motto, *In Illo uno unum* – 'in the One, we are one'.

In his message, the Holy Father reminds us that being a Christian is not first a matter of practices or ideas to be defended, but a life lived in union with Christ; the way a branch lives grafted onto the vine. He teaches that the more deeply united we are to Christ and to one another, the more fruitfully the whole Church can carry out the one mission he has entrusted to us – a mission that belongs not only to priests, religious and those who cross oceans, but to every baptised person, wherever they stand.

Jesus says: 'As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.' There is only one sending, one mission, because there is only one Christ and we are one in him. The missionary in a remote village, the catechist teaching children after Mass, the grandmother praying quietly in her home and each of us kneeling here tonight before the Blessed Sacrament – we are not many missions, but one, united and sent by the same Lord, for the sake of the world he loves so much.

For a hundred years, this Sunday in October has gathered that single Body – scattered across Asia and Oceania, Europe, the Americas and Africa – into one act of prayer and one act of giving, so that the Gospel might reach 'especially the poorest and those most in need.'

Tonight, adoring Christ present among us, let us ask him to consecrate us in truth, as he consecrated himself, and to make our unity here in this chapel a small sign of the perfect oneness he asks for the whole world to see.

[A sustained period of silence before the Blessed Sacrament. Soft instrumental music may accompany this time, if helpful]

Intercessions for the missionary Church

[The five continents recalled here echo the five decades of the Mission Rosary, each traditionally prayed in a different colour for a different region of the world. A leader may read each petition, with all responding together]

[Optional: *If you prefer, a Hail Mary, Our Father and Glory Be may be prayed for each continent, echoing the Mission Rosary]*

Asia (yellow)

We pray for the Church in Asia. May missionaries guide and strengthen believers, especially wherever they are in minorities. Though they may be small in number, we pray that they will grow rich in faith, through the love of Jesus.

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Oceania (blue)

We pray for the Church in Oceania, scattered across vast waters among many islands and peoples. May missionaries continue to share the Good News to every scattered island, always acting with compassion and humility, so that all people will know they are loved by God and by us.

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Europe (white)

We pray for the Church in Europe, now itself a mission field. May the fire of faith reawaken us; may the Church across the world inspire us, and may the message of Christ galvanise us, reawakening our missionary zeal and reminding us that our global family holds us in love and faith, even as we hold them.

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

The Americas (red)

We pray for the Church in the Americas, north, central and south, marked by both deep devotion and great division. May unity across languages, cultures and borders may be a living witness that in Christ we are truly one family.

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Africa (green)

We pray for the Church in Africa, vibrant and growing, rich in vocations and in hope. May young Christian communities be sustained amid poverty and conflict, and may God strengthen missionaries as they continue to reach out in love to all who are in need, regardless of background or belief.

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, present with us in the Blessed Sacrament, you have prayed that we might be one. Make us one in you, rooted in a love that unites rather than divides. Make us - your whole Church, united in mission - docile to your Spirit, unafraid to bear witness and generous toward every missionary who serves in your name.

As we mark a hundred years of World Mission Sunday, renew in us the joy of the first disciples, and through us, let the whole world come to know that the Father sent you and loves us even as he loves you.

Mary, Queen of the Missions, who held the whole Church together in prayer in the upper room, accompany the work of evangelisation in every corner of the earth. **Amen.**

Benediction

[Tantum Ergo, Divine Praises and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follow according to usual format]