

This short talk references the latest edition of Mission Today and the WMS donation envelopes – you may want to have both to hand during the talk.

Good evening/morning everyone. Thank you, Father, for the opportunity to speak with you all – I promise I won't keep you too long!

Today is a joyful day for the whole Church, as Catholics across the world celebrate World Mission Sunday. And this year feels especially significant because we are marking 100 years of this day of prayer, unity and generosity.

World Mission Sunday began in 1926 when Pope Pius XI asked Catholics everywhere to pray for and support missionaries – in every church, in every parish, in every diocese across the world. A century later, it remains a beautiful reminder that we are one family in Christ, sharing the joy of God's love with the whole world.

This year's theme chosen by Pope Leo is **'One in Christ, united in mission'**. The Holy Father urges us to celebrate our unity in Christ, who sends us out with a common task: proclaiming, living and sharing God's faithful love, 'so that the world may believe in Christ the Lord'. This mission – this task – belongs to all of us: mission is not just something that happens miles away, or something left to missionaries overseas. And as Pope Leo says, 'No baptised person is exempt from mission.'

That includes us.

Sometimes the lives of our sisters and brothers around the world can feel far from our own parish community; from our own missionary task. Yet World Mission Sunday draws us together with the faithful in places like Malawi, where people are being supported by the Church and missionaries like Fr Matthew. With them we are **'One in Christ, united in mission'**.

Fr Matthew serves families in Malawi whose lives have been turned upside down by severe cyclones and flooding. He puts it simply: 'We have welcomed displaced families and tried to help them by offering what we can with kindness... because kindness does not discriminate, just as poverty does not discriminate'.

Fr Matthew witnesses first-hand the results of your prayers and donations. He says that your support gives people: 'a sense of hope going forward, to say they're not left alone; that they are with the Church, they are with God and God comes to them through other people'.

This is why our prayers and gifts today matter. They help local churches bring hope through pastoral care, education, healthcare and practical support in communities facing poverty, conflict and hardship. The most recent issue of *Mission Today* helps us to see how missionaries are often the first to respond in times of crisis, and how your gifts today enable the Church to grow and develop, facilitated by Missio – the Pope's charity for world mission.

Pope Leo tells us, 'Your prayers and practical support will be a great help in bringing the Gospel of God's love to everyone, especially the poorest and those most in need. Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion.'

So today, as we celebrate 100 years of World Mission Sunday, let's do so with joy and in communion with the whole Church. Mission begins here, in our own hearts and in our own parish, and reaches out with hope to the ends of the earth.

Please pray today for missionaries and for the communities they serve. And if you are able, please give whatever you can – using a donation envelope, giving through the contactless devices, or giving online by scanning the QR code on the envelope or poster in church.

Together, through prayer, generosity and joy, we can help sow seeds of faith, hope and love – one in Christ, united in mission.

Thank you.