



For the Newsletter on Mission Sunday - 20th October 2024

Option 1

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for World Mission Sunday is: “*Go and invite everyone to the banquet*” (Mt 22:9) The banquet is that of the wedding feast of the Son, of the One who comes to marry all humanity and therefore wants to invite everyone to the wedding feast!

In his message for World Mission Sunday 2024, Pope Francis tells us: “While the world sets before us the various “banquets” of consumerism, selfish comfort, the accumulation of wealth and individualism, the Gospel calls everyone to the divine banquet, marked by joy, sharing, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others. This fullness of life, which is Christ’s gift, is anticipated even now in the banquet of the Eucharist, which the Church celebrates at the Lord’s command in memory of him. The invitation to the eschatological banquet that we bring to everyone in our mission of evangelization is intrinsically linked to the invitation to the Eucharistic table, where the Lord feeds us with his word and with his Body and Blood”.

In this Sunday’s Gospel, James and John initially fell for the ways of the world alluded to by the Pope. The two brothers seek their personal glory. Jesus tells them; “The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized.” What is this baptism for Jesus if not to be immersed in our humanity from birth to His passion and death, when He will give His life for the many? Jesus the Bridegroom teaches them, and us, something paradoxical that St Francis of Assisi captured beautifully in his famous prayer: that it is in giving that we receive, in forgiving that we are forgiven, in dying to self for others that we are born into eternal life! It is the paradox of true love.

On this World Mission Sunday, let us respond to the call of all the baptized to serve and to give our lives. Let us invite everyone to discover the richness of our Christian spirituality and our Eucharistic banquet, where Jesus gives his life for us and gives us the grace to do the same for others. Let us pray for the great universal mission of the baptized and support it concretely through our financial offerings dedicated entirely to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the pontifical work that helps young Churches. Let us stand firm in the affirmation of our faith, which has as its model the Servant and High Priest Jesus, who gives his life anew today in the banquet of his Eucharist.

Let’s go and invite everyone to the banquet of the Eucharist, to the wedding feast of the Lamb, to the banquet of true food, the bread of eternal life: this is our universal mission, *ad gentes*, to all peoples.



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Option 2

In this week's Gospel reading from Mark 10:35-45, we witness a profound teaching moment that Jesus shares with His disciples. James and John, in their eagerness, request to sit at Jesus' right and left in His glory, seeking positions of honour and power. However, Jesus redirects their understanding by emphasizing the true nature of greatness in God's kingdom: servanthood and sacrifice.

Jesus asks them, "Can you drink the cup I drink?" This question signifies the suffering and sacrifice that Jesus Himself will endure. It is a call to embrace the same path of the suffering servant, whose victory over sin and death brings redemption to many. This theme resonates deeply on Mission Sunday as we reflect on the lives and work of missionaries worldwide. Just as Jesus gave His life as an offering for sin, missionaries give their lives in service to others, often in difficult and challenging circumstances.

The passage also highlights the concept of power, not as a means to dominate or lord over others, but to serve. Jesus states, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." This teaching underscores the mission of the Church and its members to adopt a posture of humility and service, mirroring the life of Jesus. Missionaries embody this call, dedicating themselves to the most vulnerable and needy, often at great personal cost.

As we celebrate Mission Sunday, we are reminded of the importance of being confident in proclaiming the access to God assured by Jesus' redemptive work. Missionaries around the world carry on this work, bringing the message of salvation and hope to those who have yet to hear it. Their lives exemplify the call to "drink the cup" of sacrifice and service, following in the footsteps of the suffering servant.

The Missionary Church is indeed the Servant Church, reaching out to those in most need. We are called to support and join in this mission, recognizing that true greatness lies in our capacity to serve others. As we reflect on Jesus' words and the example of our missionaries, let us commit ourselves anew to the mission of the Church, confident in the victory over sin and death achieved through Christ's sacrifice, and eager to share this Good News with all.