



BAPTISED AND SENT

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MISSION
IN THE WORLD



SHARING FAITH IN THE
DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

Proclaim Westminster
building missionary parishes



forming missionary disciples

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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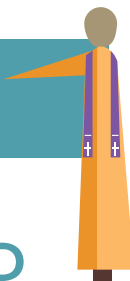
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FOREWORD

The Church exists to evangelise. Everything we ever do is – or should be – a proclamation of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Announcing the Kerygma, the saving reality of the Lord's life, death and resurrection, is what we live and breathe, and all our priorities, plans and programmes should be measured by how far they speak of Him. To know Christ, and to make Him known, is our life's work.

This new resource, "Baptised and Sent", takes us on a journey through the witness of six inspirational lives; ordinary men and women who were able, through grace, to do extraordinary things for Christ. Their lives are a lens to understand what the Extraordinary Month of Mission can inspire in us, what shape the call to be a missionary disciple can take.

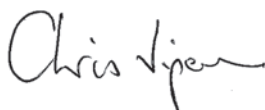
In my thirty years of ministry, first in the Church of England and now as a Catholic Priest, I have met so many missionaries, ordinary men and women who live their faith, proclaiming by their actions (and words if necessary) the transforming power of the Gospel. I hope that I can be a little bit like them.

To be a missionary is a beautiful thing – "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news" (Isaiah 52: 7-10). In the words of Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI:

*There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel,
by the encounter with Christ.*

*There is nothing more beautiful
than to know Him
and to speak to others of our friendship with Him.*

My thanks go to the author of this resource, Fr Philip Knights, for guiding us through a journey of discovery of what it can mean to be 'Baptised and Sent'.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Vipers'.

Fr Chris Vipers
Director of the Agency for Evangelisation



October 2019 has been designated by Pope Francis as an Extraordinary Month of Mission. This has: “the aim of fostering an increased awareness of the *Missio ad gentes* and taking up again with renewed fervour the missionary transformation of the Church’s life and pastoral activity, and to help their communities grow in missionary and evangelising zeal”. (Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Sunday 2017).

When the Holy Father speaks of *Missio ad gentes*, ‘the mission to the nations’, he is referring to the world mission of the Church. Our global calling is to share the good news of Jesus with all people by what we say and what we do. Our Lord Jesus Christ sends us to all nations, including England and the Diocese of Westminster, to be his witnesses, plant his Church and build his Kingdom of love, justice and peace.

The month honours the 100th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, which may be considered a major milestone in the development of Catholic mission. In *Maximum Illud* “Pope Benedict XV sought to give a renewed impetus to the missionary task of proclaiming the Gospel. ... What Pope Benedict XV so greatly desired almost a century ago ... remains timely.” (Pope Francis Letter October 2017, in *Baptised and Sent, the Church of Christ on Mission in the World: Guide to the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019* (hereafter referred to as *Guide*) p 10-11).

‘Mission’ is a relatively late word to describe what the Church is sent to do. ‘Evangelisation’ is even more recent and much ink has been spilt trying to define these terms. However, the life of the people of God sent out to engage with the world and people in the world in order to live out and share the Good News of Jesus, is foundational to who we are.

The evangelising mission of the Church always happens at that encounter between the Church and people and things beyond the Church. All of us have experience of this missional encounter; all of us live at this interface. The purpose of the Extraordinary Month of Mission is not just that we understand better the rich dimensions of the evangelising mission of the Church but also that we commit ourselves to participate in it.

The title given to this special month is *Baptised and Sent*. This emphasises the Holy Father’s desire that we all deepen our vocation to be ‘missionary disciples’. (*Evangelii Gaudium* 120).

One aspect of this renewal is to reflect on the witness of men and women who have



demonstrated in their lives key aspects of the evangelising mission of the Church. In the guide prepared for the Extraordinary Month of Mission, Baptised and Sent, the lives of 25 such witnesses are considered. (Freely available online at <http://www.october2019.va/en/mmsott2019/la-guida.html>)

For this Autumn's Faith Sharing groups, we invite you to consider six of these missionary witnesses who were themselves 'baptised and sent', and the distinctive insights they each give us. Some will be familiar: some may well be new to you. Some were ordained: some were lay. A few travelled far from home: others were profoundly missionary without ever leaving their native soil. Our hope is that thinking through their lives and witness may encourage us in our own evangelising mission.

1. St Francis Xavier
2. St Thérèse of Lisieux
3. Ven Pauline Marie Jaricot
4. Mon Filomena Yamamoto
5. Servant of God Ezechiele Ramin
6. Blessed Peter to Rot

For each of these six missionary witnesses, we shall listen to their testimony, where possible reflecting on their own words, and seek connections with our own experience. We will consider the aspects of the evangelising mission of the Church that they demonstrate and discuss how we might apply what we have seen to our own discipleship.

May the missionary witnesses inspire us to be renewed as missionary disciples.



For some of you, these practical points will be well known, but for others, they will be new. To new members of the small community, we offer a big welcome, and to returning members, welcome back. Take time to read these few pages - they will be of great benefit.

GATHERING as a small community to share prayer, life and faith is an important part of parish life. This is a sacred time. It is important that you take the time to get to know one another. Always make room for the introductions of anyone new, and to ask one another how you are and what has happened since you last met.

HOSPITALITY and environment are very important. You should meet in a reflective atmosphere with as few distractions as possible. It would be helpful to have a central focus, such as an open Bible and a candle.

TIMING is important. The suggested time for each session is 90 minutes (see page 7 for the structure of the meeting). Each session will have a balance of prayer, sharing experience, exploring scripture, reflection and talking about how we are living our faith.

PRAYER will take different forms; we will make a suggestion for a Psalm or another opening prayer. You can make other suggestions, too, as it is helpful to try varied ways of praying, such as playing some religious music. Ordinarily, it is good to have about 15 minutes of prayer. Silence is an important part of the process, so don't be afraid to pause during your prayer time or, indeed, during the reflection time for some quiet.

EXPERIENCE is essential to our spiritual life. During the session, we need to reflect on our real experience. Then we listen to Scripture. As you reflect, ensure each person who wants to talk is given an opportunity to share. No one needs to talk unless they want to, and no one person should dominate the conversation.

RESPOND Each week we have the opportunity to respond. It may be a good time to assess our priorities and see how we are living our faith in the totality of our lives: in our families, in our relationships, in our work. We may not need to do more; we may need to do less. This is the time to look at how we are living the values of Jesus and perhaps to identify new behaviours and attitudes.



WHAT IS THE LEADER OF YOUR GROUP EXPECTED TO DO?

Each community will have its own leader. A leader is not someone with all the answers who is there to put everybody else right. He or she is a fellow participant but with the particular responsibility of facilitating the community by:

- Preparing ahead of the session and creating a warm, accepting and open environment
- Guiding the group and keeping it on track through the faith sharing process each week
- Sharing the various tasks among the members of the group
- Listening and, if necessary, asking questions to keep sharing moving
- Ensuring that each participant has the opportunity to speak
- Encouraging members to see the meeting not as a discussion group, but as an opportunity for sharing in which they might grow in faith



THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

(Timings are just rough indications. Please feel very free to adapt as necessary).

5. ACT

Our sharing would not be complete without deciding how to put our faith into practice. With a reflection from Pope Francis, you will be invited to respond to what you have heard in the session.

4. REFLECT

This is an opportunity to reflect on 'our story' - God's story and your own story - and how to link the two together. What is the meaning for you? With the help of a reflection and questions, you will have the opportunity to share.

1. GATHER

⌚ 30 mins

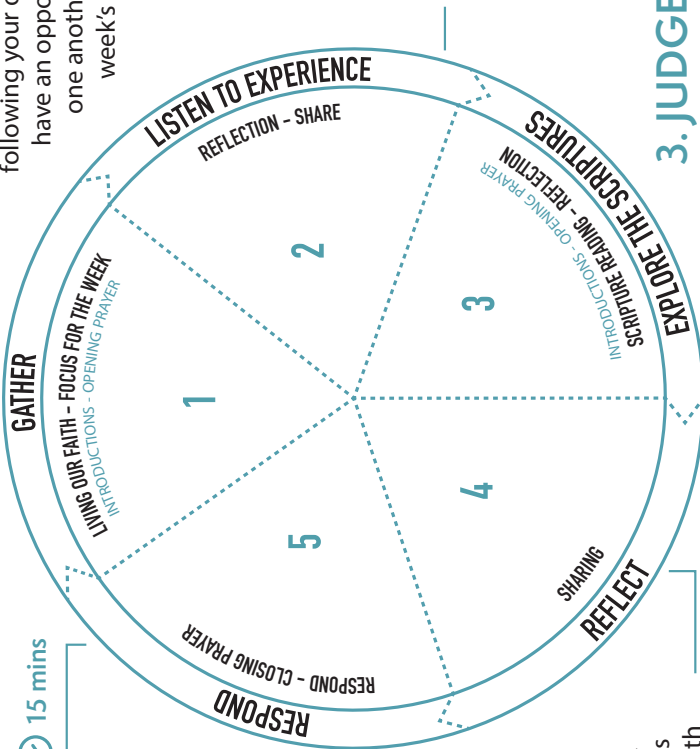
At the first meeting, introduce yourselves to each other. Thereafter, following your opening prayer, you will have an opportunity to catch up with one another, and share how last week's session influenced you.

2. SEE

This part of the session is about 'your own story' and how it relates to the theme of the session. Having listened to a short reflection, you will be given the opportunity, with the help of questions, to share your own experience.

3. JUDGE ⌚ 45 mins

This part is about exploring 'God's story' in scripture. Having listened to the scripture reading you will be invited to reflect on what you have heard.



MISSION WITNESS 1
ST FRANCIS XAVIER





ST FRANCIS XAVIER



To prepare for this first session, take time to read 'Faith sharing in a small community' and 'Structure of the meeting' on pages 5-7.

GATHER



At this first session, begin by introducing yourselves to each other. Share your names and a little about yourself.

The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*O God, who through the preaching of St Francis Xavier
won many people to yourself,
grant that the hearts of the faithful
may burn with the same zeal for the faith
and that the Holy Church may everywhere rejoice
in an abundance of offspring.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen*

(Roman Missal p 1072)



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following reflection silently or aloud:

St Francis Xavier has been called the 'greatest missionary saint of the modern age' (Guide p208). To be sure, in 2019, his life in the Sixteenth Century may appear to us pre-Modern and characterised by the Counter-Reformation, religious conflict and the beginnings of European colonialism. We know well the differences between his Tridentine Church and our post-Vatican II context. However, his time can also inform ours with its emphasis on the reform of the Church in order to promote mission and its new discovery of the richness of other cultures and its global vision.



St Francis Xavier was a larger than life character who, because of his missionary commitment, travelled across the world in order to proclaim the Gospel. He left his known, comfortable world and chose to give his life to the unknown peoples of Asia. He crossed many boundaries, endured difficult sea voyages, settled in unfamiliar places and learned (with some difficulty) new languages. He travelled many miles impelled by his love of Christ and desire to share the Good News of Jesus with those who did not know him.

St Francis Xavier was born in Navarre in Spain. He was educated at the University of Paris. There he met and made friends with Ignatius Loyola. He was convinced by Ignatius to join him as one of the first companions in what would become the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

From 1541 he journeyed throughout Asia: to India (Goa); the Moluccan Islands (now Indonesia), Japan, and was heading for China when he died on Shangchuan Island in 1552. In these journeys he sought to proclaim the Gospel, to carefully gain knowledge of the place and its people and to give basic catechetical instruction.

The spirituality of St Francis Xavier was marked by the permanent centrality of the person of Jesus Christ, even if he himself was separated by great distances from the structures of Christ's Church.

In his missionary journeys he faced many challenges. In 1552 he wrote to Ignatius to offer advice for other priests who may be sent out after him:

"...two things are necessary beforehand: the first is that they have been put to the test and have been persecuted in the world, and that they have a lot of experience and a lot of interior knowledge of themselves, since in Japan they will be persecuted more than they may have ever been in Europe. It is a cold land where there are few garments. They will not sleep in beds because there are none. Food is scarce. They despise foreigners, especially those who go to preach the law of God, until they come to taste God themselves. The priests of the local religion in Japan will persecute them continuously. I also don't think that those who will go to the University will be able to bring the things necessary to celebrate Mass because of the many thieves present in the places where they will go. Among the many pains and tribulations they will have to face is the lack of consolation from the celebration of the Mass and of the spiritual strength given to those who receive the Lord. In fact the virtue that is required by the Fathers who will go the Universities of Japan is CHARITY!"



Despite all the undoubted trials he faced, St Francis Xavier was noted for his affable manner and his respect for all the people who approached him. An observer commented that "he walked with a joyful, calm face" and "everywhere he went, he went with laughter in his mouth".

SHARE

The leader invites everyone to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story of St Francis Xavier?
- What do you imagine his greatest challenges were?
- What do you imagine his greatest rewards were?

OUR EXPERIENCES

Most of us have some experience of crossing boundaries and going from the known to the unknown: maybe travelling abroad, moving house, changing schools or changing jobs, getting married, living in a new country.

Please think on a particular personal experience of crossing a boundary.

- What were your feelings? If you feel comfortable please share both positive feelings and negative feelings.

What boundaries are you aware of that Christians should cross? These may be local or further afield, geographic, cultural or personal.

- From your experience, what would you say are the attitudes and priorities for a Christian in mission crossing these boundaries?



EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES

Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

‘Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

Matthew 28:16-20 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition (NRSVACE)

- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?

REFLECT



“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. *Mt* 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelisation, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelisation to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients.

The new evangelisation calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelisation; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”.

Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* 120



RESPOND

The leader invites everyone to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions.

- Jesus directs and commissions *all* his disciples: how does Jesus direct and commission us?
- 'All Nations' translates the Greek *panta ta ethne* – can you name nations, ethnicities, cultures, sub-cultures and other social groups that you recognise need particularly to hear the Gospel today?
- A disciple is a learner: what things do we need to learn as missionary disciples?
- There is a sacramental fruit to making disciples: how is our missionary discipleship to be expressed in our baptismal practice?
- In what practical ways can you take steps to cross boundaries for the Gospel?

Suggestions might include: spending time with your neighbours to get to know and understand them better; helping with a local volunteer group such as the SVP; taking part in a local charitable or cultural event.



CLOSING PRAYER

The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission

God our Father,

when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,

he commissioned his followers to

'go and make disciples of all nations'.

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

to be courageous and enthusiastic

in bearing witness to the Gospel,

so that the mission entrusted to us,

which is still far from completion,

may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love

and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever.

Amen



MISSION WITNESS 2
**ST THÉRÈSE OF
LISIEUX**





ST THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

GATHER



The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*O God, who open your Kingdom
to those who are humble and to little ones,
lead us to follow trustingly in the little way of Saint Thérèse,
so that through her intercession
we may see your eternal glory revealed.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God for ever and ever Amen*

(Roman Missal p 1021)



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following reflection silently or aloud:

There are many paradoxes associated with Christian mission, such as: reaching out into the world and inviting people into the Church; listening respectfully to the 'signs of the times' and witnessing to the unchanging Gospel; and being in the world but not of the world. St Thérèse is herself a paradoxical figure to be one of the patrons of the Missions. She never left France. She spent all her life in a devout family or in a religious house, seldom encountering anyone who was not a practising Catholic. She never engaged in any material actions which we might consider obviously missionary or missional. She did not feed the hungry or nurse the sick or educate children or even lead catechesis. However, she did embody in a powerful way the spirituality of mission. She had a heart for the Gospel. She had a passion for the evangelising mission of the Church. She had an empathetic unity with missionaries. She had an immense apostolate of prayer. In the eyes of the world, her life was enclosed and marked by interior contemplation: to the eyes of the faith she reached to the ends of the world to share the Good News.

St Thérèse had a passion for the missions even as a young girl. She was an enthusiastic participant in the Pontifical Missionary Society for Children, 'Holy Childhood' (now



known in England and Wales as 'Mission Together' <https://missiontogether.org.uk>).

The young Thérèse Martin had a powerful personal sense of God and a strong calling to do God's work. Although her vocation led her to an enclosed life, the cloister of the Lisieux Carmel became for St Thérèse prayerful participation in missionary efforts. She wrote:

"I would want to preach the Gospel on all the five continents simultaneously and even to the most remote isles. I would be a missionary, not for a few years only but from the beginning of creation until the consummation of the ages. But above all, O my Beloved Saviour, I would shed my blood for You even to the very last drop... Martyrdom was the dream of my youth [...], but I cannot confine myself to desiring one kind of martyrdom. To satisfy me I need all [...] Jesus, if I wanted to write all my desires, I would have to borrow Your Book of Life, for in it are reported all the actions of all the saints, and I would accomplish all of them for You" (Story of a Soul: Manuscript B, 251-252).

At one stage, it seemed possible that Thérèse might go to Vietnam (then French Indo-China) and join in the establishment of a Carmel in Hanoi, but she never left her native France. However, she did correspond with those who did travel overseas impelled with a sense of mission. Not least she became a spiritual sister to two missionary priests, Fr Maurice Bellière who became a White Father (Missionaries of Africa) and who went on to work in Malawi (then the British Central African Protectorate) and Fr Adolphe Roulland of the Society of Foreign Missions who was sent to China.

Thérèse willingly offered her trials, her sufferings and her prayers to support the vocations and works of missionaries. She recorded one of her prayers for Fr Roulland : "O my Jesus! I thank you for having fulfilled one of my greatest desires, that of having a brother, a priest, an apostle [...] You know, Lord, that my only ambition is to make you known and loved. Now my desire will be realised. I can only pray and suffer, but the soul to whom you unite me by the sweet bonds of charity will go and fight in the plain to win hearts for you, while on the mountain of Carmel I will pray that you give him victory. Divine Jesus, hear the prayer I offer you for him who wants to be your Missionary. Keep him safe amid the dangers of the world. Make him feel increasingly the nothingness and vanity of passing things and the happiness of being able to despise them for your love. May he carry out his sublime apostolate with those around him. May he be an apostle worthy of your Sacred Heart" (Prayer of 1895).

Saint Thérèse is renowned for her 'little way', her trusting completely in God and abandoning herself to his love and mercy. Her inspired humility enabled God to make her a great saint. She was able to reach out in love to the farthest corners of the world.



SHARE

The leader invites people to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story of St Thérèse?
- How might you be spiritually connected to the world mission of the Church?

An expression which used to be common amongst our Protestant brothers and sisters is the phrase 'heart for evangelism'. That is the sense of having an inner conviction which is the engine for our outer actions and which leads us to 'do great things for God'.

- What do you have a 'heart for'?
- What things is God calling you to do?
- How does prayer fit into your experience of mission?

EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES



Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

'I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.'



- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?
- The simple but deep spirituality of St Thérèse encourages us to be open to God enlightening us: dare we allow God's grace to flourish in or through us?

REFLECT



In a few moments of silence, consider the questions below then share your reflections.

The missionary power of intercessory prayer

One form of prayer moves us particularly to take up the task of evangelization and to seek the good of others: it is the prayer of intercession. Let us peer for a moment into the heart of Saint Paul, to see what his prayer was like. It was full of people: "...I constantly pray with you in every one of my prayers for all of you... because I hold you in my heart" (Phil 1:4, 7). Here we see that intercessory prayer does not divert us from true contemplation, since authentic contemplation always has a place for others.

This attitude becomes a prayer of gratitude to God for others. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you" (Rom 1:8). It is constant thankfulness: "I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:4); "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you" (Phil 1:3). Far from being suspicious, negative and despairing, it is a spiritual gaze born of deep faith which acknowledges what God is doing in the lives of others. At the same time, it is the gratitude which flows from a heart attentive to others. When evangelisers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open; freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others.

The great men and women of God were great intercessors. Intercession is like a "leaven" in the heart of the Trinity. It is a way of penetrating the Father's heart and discovering new dimensions which can shed light on concrete situations and change them. We can say that God's heart is touched by our intercession, yet in reality he is always there first. What our intercession achieves is that his power, his love and his faithfulness are shown ever more clearly in the midst of the people."



RESPOND

The leader invites people to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions

- How can we be missionary in our prayer?
- How can we be spiritually united to our missionary brothers and sisters?
- How can we support missionary vocations?

Suggestions include: praying a cycle of prayer to include each day a part of the world e.g. <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle>

Supporting the work of the Society of St Peter the Apostle foster the vocations of missionary priests and religious sisters: <https://missio.org.uk/about-spa>

Supporting the Little Way Association
<http://littlewayassociation.com>



CLOSING PRAYER

The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission

God our Father,

when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,

he commissioned his followers to

'go and make disciples of all nations'.

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

to be courageous and enthusiastic

in bearing witness to the Gospel,

so that the mission entrusted to us,

which is still far from completion,

may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love

and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever.

Amen



MISSION WITNESS 3

**VENERABLE PAULINE-
MARIE JARICOT**





VENERABLE PAULINE-MARIE JARICOT

GATHER



The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*Hasten, Lord, the day
when the Church can celebrate
the saintliness of your servant
Pauline-Marie Jaricot,
inspired by you to found
the Propagation of the Faith
and the Living Rosary,
and promote the welfare of the poor.*

*May Christians everywhere
strive to follow her selfless example,*

*dedicating themselves to spreading
the Good News of the Gospel,
so that all peoples may come to know
the boundless love revealed to the world
through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit for
ever and ever.*

Amen

<https://missio.org.uk/pray/>



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following reflection silently or aloud:

In adding a saint to the calendar there are five steps in the current process. When a person's cause has begun, he or she may be titled 'Servant of God', and after due investigation the Pope may publicly recognise the heroic virtues of the individual and he or she may be called 'Venerable'. After a duly attested miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable, he or she may be beatified and called 'Blessed'. After a second attested miracle he or she may be declared a 'Saint'. Pauline Jaricot has been declared Venerable and many are praying that she will be beatified. A miracle attributed to her intercession has been forwarded to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in Rome and is being duly investigated.

Pauline Jaricot was a laywoman who achieved great things for the Gospel. She did not travel vast distances, but her love of Christ and his Church reached out globally.



She was born in 1799 in Lyon, during the turmoil following the French Revolution. But her family had her baptised by a priest loyal to the Holy See.

As a teenager Pauline enjoyed the fun of dances and the social whirl of the well to do. But when she was fifteen she experienced a major fall and a serious head injury. This became the occasion of a conversion experience. When, as a seventeen year old, she heard a homily on 'vanity', she resolved to cast aside all fripperies such as her pleasure in fashion. She observed about herself: "God gave me a faithful heart, which could be easily stirred to piety." At this time she met Jean Vianney, then a priest in Écully, but who would become better known as the Curé d'Ars. He would continue to influence Pauline as her spiritual director.

Soon after this, Pauline had a vision of two lamps. One lamp was empty, the other overflowing. The empty lamp she understood represented France as a dying Catholic culture in the wake of the French Revolution. The second lamp she saw as the faith of younger Christians in the new mission fields. She prayed that their lively faith would enhance the lives of believers in France.

One of the dynamics of French Catholics in the aftermath of the Revolution was a commitment to repair the damage done to the Church. Pauline organized a group of girls who prayed to alleviate the sins committed against the Sacred Heart of Jesus; they were known as the Réparatrices du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus-Christ.

Pauline's brother, Phileas, went to the seminary of Saint Sulpice and there learned about the work of the Paris Mission Society in Asia. He asked Pauline, then just 20 years old, to raise funds for these missionary efforts. She responded by saying: "I want to be a missionary of the love of God throughout the world."

This group developed among the silk workers in the factory owned by her brother-in-law. Pauline encouraged the women workers to regularly pray and to contribute each week a small coin (le sou de Pauline) in order to help the missions. From this grew the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. The APF was formally established in 1822. It grew throughout France and the Catholic world. In 1922, Pope Pius XII took the APF under official Papal Protection making it one of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Its work continues today and is best known in England and Wales for its red Mission Boxes. The APF continues to pray for mission throughout the world, to share information about world mission, and continues to support directly all the younger and poorer Churches through the Universal Solidarity Fund. (<https://missio.org.uk/about-apf/>)



As well as the energy which initiated the APF, Pauline Jaricot's faithfulness also established the 'Living Rosary' in 1826. One particular decade of the rosary was distributed among fifteen people, who each recited daily that decade.

Later in her life, she sought to create a factory modelling Christian social reform. However, due to mismanagement, this failed and in 1869 Pauline was declared bankrupt. She died in poverty.

Cardinal Filoni, the prefect of the congregation for the evangelisation of peoples said of her: "Jaricot's heroic virtues do not consist in a series of miraculous events, but in that fruitful fidelity to Christ, to whom she devoted herself both in good times and in those difficult and tormented moments, as well as in the long-term vision of a commitment to evangelisation, so that all people get to know Christ and of the merciful love of God."

SHARE

The leader invites people to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story?

- The vision of Pauline Jaricot was of regular prayer and giving: the simple prayers and small coins offered week by week grew and gave an orientation to supporting mission. What do you do 'little and often'? Are there regular practices in your life which give a pattern to your faith and devotion?

EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES



Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

'We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints—



and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. Now as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you - so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something - now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has - not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, 'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.'

2 Corinthians 8:1-15 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition (NRSVACE)

- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?
- Generosity to our brothers and sisters in Christ is an important part of our community life: how do you express this in your discipleship?

REFLECT



In a few moments of silence, consider the questions below. Then share your reflections.

"I would like to conclude with a brief word about the Pontifical Mission Societies, already proposed in *Maximum Illud* as a missionary resource. The Pontifical Mission Societies serve the Church's universality as a global network of support for the Pope in his missionary commitment by prayer, the soul of mission, and charitable offerings from Christians throughout the world. Their donations assist the Pope in the evangelisation



efforts of particular Churches (the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith), in the formation of local clergy (the Pontifical Society of Saint Peter the Apostle), in raising missionary awareness in children (Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood) and in encouraging the missionary dimension of Christian faith (Pontifical Missionary Union). In renewing my support for these societies, I trust that the extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 will contribute to the renewal of their missionary service to my ministry.”



Pope Francis Message for World Mission Sunday 2019

RESPOND

The leader invites people to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions.

- How can we help mission societies and missionaries?
- How can we grow in understanding of the world mission of the Church?

Suggestions include: praying with the Pope in his monthly missionary intentions
<https://www.popesprayer.va>

Having a *Missio* red box in our homes to remind us to pray and offer a small but regular donation

Supporting other specific missionary societies.



CLOSING PRAYER



The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission

God our Father,

when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,

he commissioned his followers to

'go and make disciples of all nations'.

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

to be courageous and enthusiastic

in bearing witness to the Gospel,

so that the mission entrusted to us,

which is still far from completion,

may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love

and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever.

Amen



MISSION WITNESS 4

**SERVANT OF GOD
EZECHIELE RAMIN**





SERVANT OF GOD EZECHIELE RAMIN

GATHER



The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*O God, who have revealed
that peacemakers are called to be your children
grant we pray,
that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice
which alone ensures true and lasting peace.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God for ever and ever. Amen.
(Roman Missal p1360)*



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following reflection silently or aloud:

Ezechiele Ramin, Lele to his Italian friends, was a missionary in the sense that we most often presume Catholic missionaries to be: he was a member of a Society of Apostolic Life dedicated to working with people in the Global South.

Over the years several key phrases have described missionary endeavour: 'the salvation of souls', 'the plantation of the Church', 'the inculturation of the Gospel', 'the New Evangelisation' and others. Perhaps the missional phrase most associated with Ezechiele Ramin is 'justice and peace'. He embodied the teaching of the Synod of Bishops after the Second Vatican Council who declared: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel."

In a speech he offered on World Mission Sunday in October 1971, just when the Bishops of the world were gathering for that Synod, and when he was but eighteen years old, Ezechiele said: "Christ is now on the road to Emmaus, in the streets. He is the face of



the poor brother, the old man devoured by leprosy, the millions of hungry, the 600,000 undernourished children. Our Christianity is a strong commitment that can become, if we want, a witness of life to those around us, because one never arrives before God alone."

That early commitment was maintained throughout his life. As a young man he was committed to the Open Doors project in Padua, offering solidarity with some of the most marginalised, not least through summer work projects which provided finance for local small scale projects in the Global South. Because of his commitment to serve the poorest of the poor, he offered himself as a missionary with the Comboni Missionary Congregation. Whilst studying in America, he worked with disadvantaged African American communities in Richmond, Virginia.

After ordination he was sent to Brazil. In 1984 he was sent to the Cacoal mission in the state of Rondônia, in Amazônia Legal. This was an area of considerable tension, with much movement of people, dispossession of indigenous communities and the influence of large commercial corporations acquiring land. Fr Ezechiele came to minister to a community of landless farmers who had settled on land claimed by multi-national companies. He sought to be an honest broker and worked with Trades Union representatives to seek a resolution of the tensions between the farmers and the armed guards employed by the corporations.

Being placed in the middle of such disruptive forces was always to be an uncomfortable place but this was where the vision of being a peacemaker placed Fr Ezechiele. Indeed, at Mass on Sunday February 17, 1985, just twelve months after his arrival in Cacoal, he told the congregation: "The father who is speaking to you has received death threats. Dear brothers, if my life is for you, my death too will be for you."

However, the threats did not deter him. He continued his efforts to find a peaceful and just resolution. But following a meeting with the farmers on July 24th 1985, in the town of Aripuanã (Mato Grosso), he was targeted by the armed guards. Gunmen blocked the road he was travelling on to return to Cacoal. His last recorded words were: "I am a priest! Men, let's talk!" However, he was repeatedly shot. When his body was recovered he had been shot 75 times. His killers ripped off the cross he always wore.

On the 25th anniversary of his death, the Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries wrote to his Brazilian confreres:

"Ezechiele was a missionary who lived his consecration to the end and did not back down. He offered his life in love to the Lord and to the brothers who in a very short time knew



how to earn his heart and helped him to discover the face of God in those who live in suffering, forgetfulness, injustice and often in oblivion.

"We know that his example of missionary radicalism and his dedication to the most abandoned continues to serve as a stimulus for many Christians in the communities who seek to live faithfully the Christian commitment in building a more just and fraternal society, and beyond remembrance, remains the figure of the priest and the missionary who knew how to live an experience of profound communion with his people."

SHARE

The leader invites people to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story?
- Have you ever been a peacemaker in the midst of people in dispute? How did that feel?
- What things do you see around you which make you want to change the world?

EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES



Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

'When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."



And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:16-21 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition (NRSVACE)

- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?
- Can you give examples today of 'Good News for the Poor'?

REFLECT



In a few moments of silence, consider the questions below. Then share your reflections.

"Between evangelisation and human advancement - development and liberation - there are, in fact, profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelised is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man? We ourselves have taken care to point this out, by recalling that it is impossible to accept "that in evangelisation one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need."

Pope St Paul VI *Evangelium Nuntiandii* 31

Pope St Paul VI uses technical language here: 'anthropological' relating to humanity, 'theological', relating to the purposes of God, and 'evangelical', relating to the Gospel and the mission of the Church. Justice and peace are obviously good for humanity and human societies, but they are also part of the revelation of God's being and actions as well as duties for the Church in mission.



RESPOND

The leader invites people to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions.

- How can we be witnesses to the Gospel values of justice and peace?
- What sort of things can you do to contribute to a world closer to the vision of the Kingdom of God?

Suggestions include: volunteering in a local project to help the marginalised or disadvantaged;

supporting a Catholic agency or charity working with people in need, such as CAFOD
www.cafod.org.uk

working with projects supported by Caritas Westminster
<https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/>

Supporting Justice and Peace Network
<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/westminster/>



CLOSING PRAYER

The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission

God our Father,

when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,

he commissioned his followers to

'go and make disciples of all nations'.

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

to be courageous and enthusiastic

in bearing witness to the Gospel,

so that the mission entrusted to us,

which is still far from completion,

may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love

and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever.

Amen



MISSION WITNESS 5
**MON FILOMENA
YAMAMOTO**





MON FILOMENA YAMAMOTO

GATHER



The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*O God, who have taught your Church
to keep your heavenly commandments
by loving you and loving our neighbour,
grant us a spirit of peace and grace,
so that your entire family
may be devoted to you wholeheartedly
and united in purity of intent.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever, Amen*

(Roman Missal p1360)



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following reflection silently or aloud:

Our missionary witness is someone who herself came to faith in Christ and became a Catholic having been brought up a Buddhist. In her life she demonstrated a depth of personal spirituality marked by inner serenity and outward service. She was always open minded and willing to engage with those who were exploring other paths while demonstrating her deep devotion to Christ, his Blessed Mother and the life of the Church. Her life was a life dedicated utterly to others.

Mon Filomena Yamamoto wrote of her journey into Catholic Christianity:

“Thinking of the environment in which I grew up and of the events that preceded the grace of baptism, I clearly see the loving hand of God who guided me in a silent and hidden way.



I was born to a Buddhist family of the Zen current. In the house there was an altar where the mortuary tablets of our ancestors were venerated. Every morning we offered a cup of tea and a little cup of rice, and we stopped to pray with folded hands.

When pilgrims passed by on their way to some temple or when poor people came, we would offer them rice to eat. We had a profound connection with the temple. As a child I often went to visit it. I listened to the monk's sermons and I wondered why people are born and then die, why there is suffering and why those who do good in the world so often are the ones who suffer while those who do evil succeed and live in comfort. I would often dwell on these thoughts, but I did not dare to ask adults, because I had the impression that they would not be able to answer me.

"Through nature, with the marvellous spectacle of changing seasons, I believe the Lord spoke to me. I felt that, above the deities of the ancient religions of Japan, there must be a God who created heaven and earth and that I had to look for the true religion. I prayed to find it, but I did not know where to find it.

When I was 23, I left my town to go to Miyazaki. Invited by a friend, I began to attend the Catholic Church and catechetical lessons. At the beginning, I felt a certain resistance towards faith in one God, because Japanese culture is imbued with the presence of many deities that are not exclusive of each other. But, continuing the study of Christianity, when I could listen to the passage about the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord and understand the marvellous work of redemption, I felt within me the firm conviction that I had finally found what I had sought for years."

Mon Filomena Yamamoto grew in faith and became a Xaverian Missionary of Mary. She had a special dedication to visiting the sick, the elderly and the lonely. She was noted for her simplicity of life, her attitude of welcome and her spark of humour.

She was also committed to the work of constructive dialogue with people of other faiths. The Director of the Shinmeizan Centre for Interreligious Dialogue offered this testimony: "I owe much gratitude to Sister Yamamoto Mon, not only because for three years she generously contributed to the life and activities of Shinmeizan, but also and even more for the quality of her presence and for her example of religious life. Always serene and jovial, she was however also very serious and precise in the observance of community life and in other aspects of religious life. Prayer was very important in her life. She was sober and simple and avoided useless chatter, hardworking and very diligent in carrying out the work entrusted to her."



In 2011 she was diagnosed with a malignant tumour but even during her illness, and whilst in hospital, her faith and spirituality shone through. "I went to visit her in the hospital," wrote a Xavierian missionary friend. "Even then I remember her concern for others. She had made of her room a 'little church' where she was in the company of Jesus. While doing chemo she had the opportunity to prepare for death and talked about it with those who went to see her, leaving behind a testimony of faith and serenity from her unconditional trust in Jesus."

SHARE

The leader invites people to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story?
- Have you ever seen the 'silent and hidden' hand of God in your life? In the lives of others?
- What positive things have you seen in those around you who are not Catholics or not Christian?

EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES



Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

'While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the market-place every day with those who happened to be there. Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said: 'What does this babblor want to say?' Others said: 'He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.' (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him: 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.' Now all the Athenians



and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said: 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription: "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said:

"For we too are his offspring."

Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' At that point Paul left them. But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.'

Acts 17:16-34 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition (NRSVACE)

- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?
- Paul both sees the positive in those he addresses and faithfully proclaims the Gospel: what does this tell us about our need to be open to others and clear in our own beliefs and practices?



REFLECT



In a few moments of silence, consider the questions below. Then share your reflections.

"[The] evangelising mission of the Church is a "single but complex and articulated reality". ... principal elements of this mission [include]: presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and contemplation; interreligious dialogue; and finally, proclamation and catechesis. Proclamation and dialogue are thus both viewed, each in its own place, as component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelising mission of the Church. They are both oriented towards the communication of salvific truth.

There exist different forms of interreligious dialogue. It may be useful to recall those mentioned by the 1984 document of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue(17). It spoke of four forms, without claiming to establish among them any order of priority:

- a) The dialogue of life, where people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations.
- b) The dialogue of action, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people.
- c) The dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values.
- d) The dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute."

Joint publication of the Pontifical Council for the Evangelisation of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Dialogue and Proclamation (1991) 2, 42

RESPOND



The leader invites people to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions. Then share your reflections.



- How can you engage in the 'dialogue of life' or the 'dialogue of action' with those who are not Christians? How can you live well with the neighbours you have who are not Catholics or Christians?
- What opportunities do you have to learn of the religious experiences of others and to share your own experiences?

Suggestions include: taking part in the many local inter-faith events in our diocese; supporting Westminster Interfaith <https://westminsterinterfaith.org.uk/>

Spending time with practising members of other faith traditions and courteously enquiring about their belief and practice.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission



God our Father,

**when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers to
'go and make disciples of all nations'.**

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

**Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and enthusiastic
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to us,
which is still far from completion,
may bring life and light to the world.**

**May all peoples experience the saving love
and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.**

Amen



MISSION WITNESS 6
**BLESSED PETER
TO ROT**





BLESSED PETER TO ROT

GATHER



The group leader invites the group to pray the Opening Prayer together.

OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty ever-living God,
who gave the martyrs
the grace of suffering for Christ,
come in your divine mercy, we pray,
to the help of our own weakness,
that as your saints did not hesitate to die for your sake,
we too, may live bravely in confessing you
through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Roman Missal p1112, slightly adapted)



LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCE



Take a few minutes to read the following three short reflections silently or aloud:

Blessed Peter To Rot was the first native Papua New Guinean to be beatified. He was a second generation Catholic, his Father, a village chief, having accepted Christianity in the late nineteenth century. Peter To Rot became an exemplary husband and Father, and an exceptional catechist. He was killed by the Japanese in 1945 for his fidelity to Christ and his courageous defence of Christian marriage.

Although missionaries had suggested that he should test a vocation to the priesthood, his father insisted that he rather be trained as a catechist. It is hard to underestimate the importance of catechists in mission. Throughout the global South, it has often been the catechists who have been the primary evangelisers. Certainly, Peter To Rot gained a reputation as an able communicator of faith.

After the 1942 Japanese invasion of Papua New Guinea, priests and religious were interned. This gave an even greater importance to catechists. As a layman, Peter To Rot remained free. He was forced to take on new public responsibilities which included leading Sunday



Prayer, witnessing weddings, baptising children and presiding at funerals.

Although the Japanese did not totally forbid Catholic worship, they did loot and destroy churches. Peter To Rot built a wooden chapel in the forest and made underground hiding places for the sacred vessels. There was a missionary priest who had escaped internment hiding in the forest and To Rot was able to lead people to him for the sacraments.

The Japanese, in a deliberate ploy to undermine Western influence and divide the community, reintroduced polygamy. Peter To Rot declared: "I will never stop telling Christians about the dignity and great importance of the sacrament of marriage."

Because of his fidelity to the Church and his open rejection of polygamy, he was arrested in 1945. He died in custody. When his body was recovered an injection mark was noticed which his family observed smelled of cyanide. They also saw stab wounds and marks of strangulation.

Pope St John Paul II said during the Beatification Mass of Peter To Rot: "Because the Spirit of God dwelt in him, he fearlessly proclaimed the truth about the sanctity of marriage.... Condemned without trial, he suffered his martyrdom calmly. Following in the footsteps of his Master, the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (Jn.1: 29), he too was 'led like a lamb to the slaughter' (Cf. Is. 53: 7). And yet this 'grain of wheat' which fell silently into the earth (Cf. Jn. 12: 24) has produced a harvest of blessings for the Church in Papua New Guinea!... Thanks to the Spirit of God that dwelt in him, he boldly proclaimed the truth about the sanctity of marriage."

SHARE

The leader invites everyone to take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard or read. Then share your reflections on the following questions:

- What strikes you from the story?
- There are many joys in Christian discipleship but there are also necessary moments of difficulty: are you able to reflect on some of the difficulties that you have experienced because of your faith?



EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES

Sometime before the meeting, the leader should ask a member of the group to be prepared to read the Scripture passage.

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said. 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice: 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.'

Acts 7:54-60 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition (NRSVACE)

- Do any words or phrases strike you from this?
- Do any questions, feelings or comments arise for you?
- Have you ever seen good things which have come from sacrifice?

REFLECT



In a few moments of silence, consider the questions below. Then share your reflections.

"Proclamation is inspired by faith, which gives rise to enthusiasm and fervour in the missionary. As already mentioned, the Acts of the Apostles uses the word parrhesia to describe this attitude, a word which means to speak frankly and with courage. This term is found also in St. Paul: "We had courage in our God to declare to you the Gospel of God in the face of great opposition" (1 Th 2:2); "Pray...also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph 6:18-20).

In proclaiming Christ to non-Christians, the missionary is convinced that, through the



working of the Spirit, there already exists in individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death. The missionary's enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ comes from the conviction that he is responding to that expectation, and so he does not become discouraged or cease his witness even when he is called to manifest his faith in an environment that is hostile or indifferent. He knows that the Spirit of the Father is speaking through him (cf. Mt 10:17-20; Lk 12:11-12) and he can say with the apostles: "We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:32). He knows that he is not proclaiming a human truth, but the "word of God," which has an intrinsic and mysterious power of its own (cf. Rom 1:16).

The supreme test is the giving of one's life, to the point of accepting death in order to bear witness to one's faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout Christian history, martyrs, that is, "witnesses," have always been numerous and indispensable to the spread of the Gospel. In our own age, there are many: bishops, priests, men and women religious, lay people - often unknown heroes who give their lives to bear witness to the faith. They are par excellence the heralds and witnesses of the faith."

Pope St John Paul II Redemptoris Missio 45

RESPOND

The leader invites people to take a few moments in silence to reflect on the questions. Then share your reflections.

The word 'martyr' means witness. All Christians are to be witnesses, even if most of us will escape with our lives.

■ What can you do to publicly witness to your faith?

Suggestions include: wearing a Christian symbol, such as a crucifix; Working with people in need; Christian married couples volunteering to mentor engaged couples; Offering prayer cards outside your parish church and being willing to pray with passers-by; Making sure your parish has a clear (and welcoming!) welcome notice.



CLOSING PRAYER

The Official Prayer of the Extraordinary Month of Mission

God our Father,

when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead,

he commissioned his followers to

'go and make disciples of all nations'.

**Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission
among all peoples.**

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit

to be courageous and enthusiastic

in bearing witness to the Gospel,

so that the mission entrusted to us,

which is still far from completion,

may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love

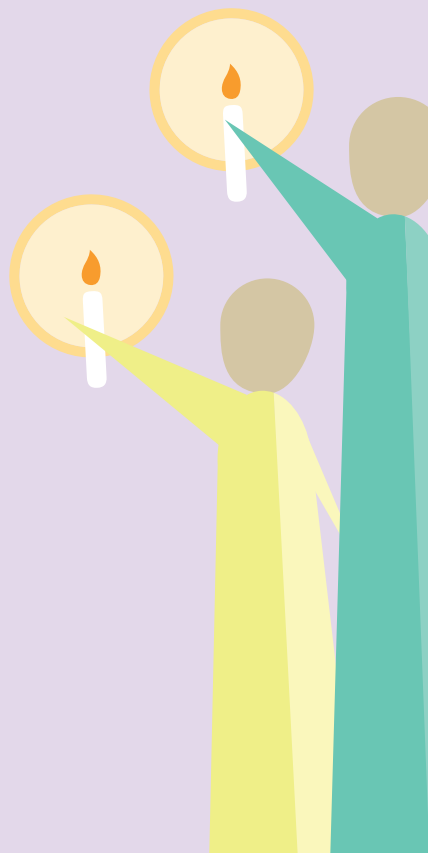
and generous mercy of Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever.

Amen





Fr Philip Knights

Fr Philip was born, bred and schooled in Norfolk.

He read Biochemistry at Wadham College Oxford. Whilst there he began exploring a vocation to priesthood in the Church of England. Having been accepted for ordination training after university, he taught in a mission school in Zambia and spent some time working with severely disabled people back in Norfolk. He trained for the Anglican Priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. While there, he studied for a degree in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds.

He served a first curacy in Ashington, Northumberland and a second curacy in Leytonstone. During this time he also studied for a PhD in Leeds focussing on models of mission in Southern Africa, which included some research in South Africa. He was for a while the Chaplain of Keble College, Oxford, before becoming the Team Vicar of Cowley, where he met and subsequently married Jane.

He was instructed in Catholicism at St Benet's Hall, Oxford (a Benedictine Permanent Private Hall) and received into the Catholic Church at Greyfriars, the Franciscan parish in Oxford.

Jane and he moved to Bishop's Stortford. He taught at the Missionary Institute London and became a member of the Catholic Missionary Society. Whilst at the CMS he was ordained as a Catholic Priest. When the CMS was closed he remained with its successor body, CASE, the Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation.

He was for nine years the Priest Administrator of Marychurch, Hatfield. In 2016 he was sent to be the Parish Priest of Royston.

Fr Philip is an Oblate of Belmont Abbey. He is the Diocesan Director of Missio. He is a Trustee of the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide and a member of the Mission Theology Advisory Group.

As well as his ecclesial, pastoral and missiological interests, Fr Philip is a long-standing supporter of Norwich City, has a love of books and music and enjoys birdwatching and walking.