

Share Christ's Light

Reverend Robert Gillelan
World Mission Sunday · October 18, 2026

Today we celebrate World Mission Sunday, which is the one Sunday out of the year when we dedicate ourselves to praying for the Church's missionary efforts around the world, and we support them financially. So there's just one collection today: you do have a missionary appeal envelope in your packet of envelopes, so if you brought that today, just throw that in with your other \$500 that you donated to St. Mary's Church. If you forgot or you're not prepared, you really do want to donate to the missions, but not today you can still donate.

Even if you don't have a missionary appeal envelope, next week you can write a check to Saint Mary's and put on the memo line "mission" or "mission appeal," or just put some cash in an envelope and mark it "mission" or "missionary appeal." We'll make sure it gets to the missions.

So, we recognize that the Church has this missionary character about it, and it always has, and it always will, and something we forget is that we are also a part of that missionary effort. Those of you who are old enough, you remember the Latin dismissal at Mass: "*Ite, missa est.*" *Deo gratias* was the response.

Thanks be to God. "*Ite, missa est*" - "go, you are sent." Response? *Deo gratias*.

Thanks be to God. We are thanking God for sending us out into the mission field to do what? Well, as Pope Leo XIV says, *to make Christ's love visible in our world*. Or another way of saying it is to share the light of Christ.

But if you're older like me, you may have grown up in a church that didn't so much proclaim the love of Christ. Often we proclaim the law, the rules, the precepts, the commandments.

When you think about it, Jesus said, “Go out to all the world and proclaim the good news.” That’s the good news about Him. He did not say, “Go out to all the world and proclaim the law.”

These are a few examples. So, you know, back in the day, if somebody would have asked us, “Why do you go to Mass?” we very well might have said, “Well, because it’s a commandment.” It’s the third commandment.

It’s an obligation as a Catholic.

That’s all true, but is it the best answer? Or, “Why do you go to confession?” Well, because if I die with a mortal sin on my soul, I’m going to go to hell.

I fear the fires of hell. Well, that too may be true, but how attractive is that to someone who may be inquiring about our faith, about our religion?

Or, “Why do Catholics abstain from meat on Fridays in Lent?” Well, because it’s a rule. You know, that’s what a good Catholic would say, right?

Back in the day. Or, “Why do you put money in a collection basket?” Because it’s one of the five precepts of the Church.

I mean, in their own way, those are all correct answers, but in their own way, they’re still all wrong answers as well. Nobody joins any institution or any group because of its rules or its law.

No one joins a sports team because of its rules. No one joins a country club because of its bylaws.

And certainly no one joins a religion or church because of its laws. You would never say to someone inquiring about the Catholic Church, “You should join us. We have 1,752 laws in our code of canon law.” You would never say that. So, let’s understand the part that we should be saying out loud, and that’s the part that’s in our hearts, but it’s the part that we often don’t say.

We need to say these things out loud. So, “Why do you go to Mass?”
Because I love the Lord, and I want to give Him praise and thanksgiving for the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

“Why do you go to confession?” I go to confession because I love the Lord, and I want to ask His forgiveness for my sins and try again, with the help of His grace, to live in His grace and friendship.

And, “Why do we abstain from meat on Fridays in Lent?” Yes, it is a rule, but I do it because I love the Lord, and my small sacrifice reminds me of our Lord’s great sacrifice on the cross.

And, “Why do you put money in the collection basket?” Yes, it is a precept of the Catholic Church.

But why do you do it? Why do we do it?

Because we love the Lord, and we want to support His mission within the Church and in the world. When we speak like that, we are proclaiming Christ.

We are proclaiming His goodness to us and our loving response. Those are the things that we need to learn to say out loud, to be credible in this world, and to really, I think, share the light of Christ and make His love visible in our world today.

Remembering what Jesus said, “Go out to all the world and proclaim the good news.” He never said, “Go out to all the world and proclaim the law.” So, today, as we celebrate World Mission Sunday, thank you for your support for the missions worldwide, remembering that our missionaries have carried the Catholic faith to every continent on Earth.

Let’s continue to pray for their efforts as they share the light of Christ and make His love visible in our world. Thank you for your generosity in supporting their mission, and that we also support them by embracing our missionary vocation to “*Ite, missa est*” - “go, we are sent” - that we too may share the light of Christ and make His love visible in our world by all that we share, and say, and do.

May the Holy Spirit help us to do that with deepest love, courage, and clarity.