



ONE IN CHRIST,
United in Mission

100 YEARS OF WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

World Mission Sunday
October 18th, 2026

Last year
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Come Celebrate the Worldwide Church!

Please Join Us for a Pontifical Mass for World Mission Sunday on Oct. 18

On Sunday, Oct. 18, Catholics from across the Diocese of Scranton are invited to gather at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton for a Pontifical Mass celebrating **World Mission Sunday**. The Mass will begin at 12:15 p.m.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will serve as principal celebrant. The homilist will be Father Sudhir Toppo, Administrator of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Susquehanna, who is one of more than 20 international priests currently serving in the Diocese of Scranton.

A native of India and member of the Heralds of Good News, Mother Theresa Province, Father Toppo was ordained to the priesthood in 2016. Before becoming Administrator in Susquehanna, he also served as Assistant Pastor of parishes in Shohola, Lords Valley, Dingman Township and Conyngham.

Religious Sisters from Africa will also play a significant role in the World Mission Sunday Mass, offering a musical prelude before the liturgy begins and participating in the Presentation of the Gifts.

Their presence at the Cathedral will offer a powerful reminder that the Catholic Church is truly universal – bringing together people, cultures and communities from around the world in one faith.

Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will provide a live broadcast of the Mass. The Mass will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

Join us in this universal mission to spread the Gospel and share the love of Christ!

Pope Leo XIV Calls Catholics to Renew Missionary Spirit

VATICAN CITY - Pope Leo XIV is urging Catholics around the world to renew their commitment to the Church's missionary vocation by becoming more deeply united in Christ and with one another.

In his message for the 100th World Mission Sunday, to be observed Oct. 18, the Holy Father chose the theme "One in Christ, united in mission," calling the Church to continue its missionary journey with "joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit."

Pope Leo writes that union with Christ is at the heart of the Church's mission. Drawing on Jesus' prayer that his disciples "may all be one," he says Christian life is more than a collection of practices or ideas. He says it is a life of union with Christ that leads to communion among believers and becomes the source of missionary fruitfulness.

The Pope acknowledges that conflicts, polarization, misunderstandings and a lack of trust can weaken the Church's witness. He therefore calls for communities marked by reconciliation, fraternity and cooperation.

At the same time, Pope Leo stresses that missionary unity does not mean uniformity. Different cultures, spiritual traditions and gifts can come together in the same faith and serve the same purpose:

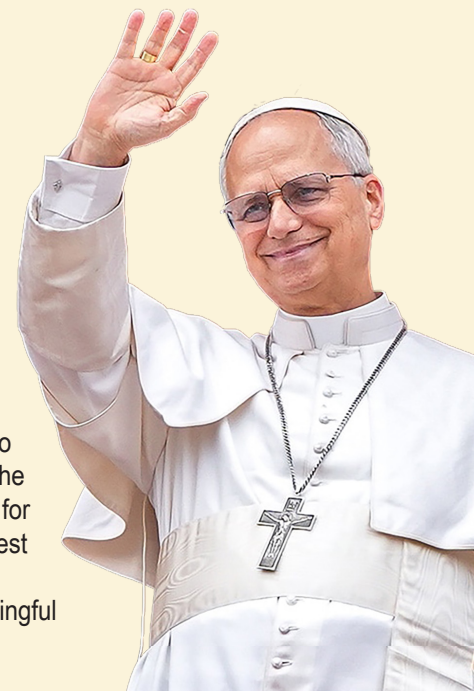
"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion,"
- Pope Leo XIV

making Christ's love visible and inviting others to encounter him.

"If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence," he writes, describing the Gospel as the proclamation of God's faithful love revealed in Jesus Christ.

The Pope concludes by inviting all Catholics to share in the Church's missionary work through the witness of their lives, prayer and practical support for missionaries, especially those serving the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion," he writes.



Bishop Bambera's Message for World Mission Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Before His Ascension into heaven, Jesus gave His disciples a final command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). For more than two thousand years, the Church has taken that command to heart, and yet the work is far from complete.

Today, two out of every three people on earth - some 5.5 billion people - have not yet come to know Christ or His Church. This is sobering to consider, but it is also a summons. Bringing others to Jesus is not the task of missionaries alone; it belongs to all of us, by virtue of our baptism. World Mission Sunday gives us a concrete way to answer that call together.

I often think of the missionary priests and religious sisters and brothers who have served, or continue to serve, the people of the Diocese of Scranton - men and women who left their homes and family to bring Christ to a place not their own, often at personal sacrifice. Their generosity has enriched our parishes immeasurably, and it reminds us that the missionary spirit is not something distant or abstract. It has a face, and often it is a familiar one. For their witness, and for all who continue this work in the 1,130 mission dioceses across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and the Middle East, I am deeply thankful, and I hope you will join me in holding them up in prayer today.

The collection we take up on World Mission Sunday supports precisely this work - reaching places where the Church is barely present, where the Gospel has scarcely been heard, and where local churches are too young, too poor, or too

persecuted to sustain themselves without our help.

This year's celebration carries particular significance. It marks the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday's establishment by Pope Pius XI in 1926 - a century of the universal Church standing in solidarity with her missionaries.

Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme "One in Christ, united in mission" for this centenary year, inviting us to rediscover the unity we already share through baptism, and how that unity naturally overflows into mission. Pope Leo understands the stakes of this day in a personal way. He spent many years as a missionary in Peru, serving communities in the Andean highlands and rural villages, and he has spoken openly about how much that ministry depended on the generosity of the universal Church through World Mission Sunday.

I would also ask you to keep in mind the beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen on September 24, 2026. Though many remember him for his television presence and his gift for preaching, Sheen himself said that his greatest love was always for the missions of the Church. For sixteen years, as National Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies here in the United States, he devoted himself to World Mission Sunday and to seeing that its proceeds reached those who needed them most. I have no doubt we can count on his intercession this year.

This World Mission Sunday, I ask that you respond to the needs of our missionary brothers and sisters as generously as you are able.

Please know of my prayers that this year's celebration will be a blessing for our diocese, and that it will stir in each of us a renewed missionary zeal. May the Holy Spirit rekindle in us the fire of the early Church, that we might truly be "One in Christ, united in mission" - growing together in missionary awareness, solidarity, and responsibility.



Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph C. Bambera".

Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton

Your Dollars At Work: Making a Difference Around the World

On World Mission Sunday, a second collection helps the Church spread the Gospel in missionary lands. These are places (1,130 of them to be exact) where the Church basically barely exists, or where she is so young, poor, or persecuted that she cannot support herself in terms of personnel and resources.

World Mission Sunday features the only collection mandated in the Church's canon law, because it's essential to the Church's carrying out the mission Jesus entrusted to us to proclaim the Gospel to all people and nations.

What's raised on World Mission Sunday is used to make possible the heroic work of missionary bishops, priests, religious sisters, and lay catechists who labor, sometimes under threat of death, to share our faith. It helps build churches, seminaries, convents, and catechetical centers. It provides for basic needs like transport, food, and shelter. It helps pass on the faith to children and to their parents.

Nowhere is this reality more vivid than in a place like Mongolia.

It is one of the youngest Catholic communities on earth. Mongolia has only had a stable Catholic community for just over 30 years.

In 1992, following the fall of communism, three Catholic missionary priests arrived from Italy. At the time, there were zero Catholics except them. Today, thanks to the hard work of these missionaries, supported in large part by World Mission Sunday, about fifty Mongolians a year have become Catholic. As of Easter Sunday, there are exactly 1,575 baptized Catholics in a nation of over 3.5 million people.

The Church in Mongolia is the missionary frontier in the fullest sense, and most of this work has been made possible by the support the missionaries receive from abroad, especially World Mission Sunday. The first three missionaries, and the two dozen or so

missionaries who have followed after them, are literally building the Church from scratch. Even today, the first seminary is still in its planning stages, and the first native priest was ordained only in 2016. These Catholics are in the exhilarating but fragile phase of first-generation faith.

Last year, support from U.S. Catholics helped the Church in Mongolia expand a formation center to train catechists and Church workers to bring the faith more effectively throughout their vast country, as well as a study center where the Christian classics can be translated into Mongolian. Right now, only the Bible exists in Mongolian; at the new study center, the translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is underway, together with writings of the popes and classics from the saints.

On Oct. 18, when your parish takes up the World Mission Sunday collection, please join this "missionary spirit" of the Church, considering the people in Mongolia. Their names and faces, and their dreams, are the names, faces, and dreams of World Mission Sunday.



A woman prays during Mass in the Steppe Arena in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Sept. 3, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Too Many Priests? Nigeria Can't Welcome Them All

Every year, bishops across Nigeria sit across from young men who want to give their lives to God and the Church in the Catholic priesthood. The bishops listen carefully. And then, more often than the bishops can bear, they have to look a man in the eyes and say: I believe your calling is real, but I cannot accept you. There is not enough room, there are not enough funds, you will have to wait.

The dioceses do not have the money to send them to the seminary, to feed them, to house them through the years of formation that the priesthood requires.

Father Augustine Ikwu, a priest from Nigeria involved in priestly seminary formation, said, "In many dioceses of the world, the Church prays for more vocations. In Nigeria, we pray for the resources to welcome the vocations God has already sent."

Nigeria is, by nearly every measure, one of the most vibrantly Catholic nations on earth. Some 94% of Nigerian Catholics attend Sunday Mass. In the Diocese of Nsukka alone, the number of priests more than doubled in ten years, surpassing 400 priests in 2024. And yet, for all this abundance of faith, the seminaries can only house and train a fraction of the men who discern that Christ is calling them. And while this crisis unfolds quietly inside seminary walls, outside those walls, the situation is anything but quiet.

To become a Catholic priest in Nigeria's missionary dioceses is not a path toward comfort or security. Priests across Nigeria have to be prepared to defend the faith even unto death. Seminarians are reminded that kidnapping, persecution, and killing are not hypothetical ideas. They are realities. Five Catholic priests were abducted and killed in the early months of 2026 alone.

This is the context in which young men discern their vocations. They are not fleeing poverty by seeking the seminary. Rather, they are walking toward danger and making of their lives a true sacrificial offering. The priesthood in Nigeria is on the frontlines. And the young men still come, in numbers that far exceed what the Church can receive. But there is something we can do to help.

The difficulties in Nigeria are precisely the type of difficulties that World Mission Sunday was designed to meet.

On Oct. 18, the World Mission Sunday collection will fund what these missionary lands need most: training seminarians, building churches, supporting religious sisters and brothers, and educating children in Catholic schools.

Father Ikwu, speaking about the impact of World Mission Sunday, said, "When Catholics across the world support the missions, they are not merely funding buildings or institutions. They are helping to form future priests who will preach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, educate children, comfort the suffering, and bring hope to countless communities."

On this World Mission Sunday, every Catholic who sits in a comfortable pew, in a country where churches are not burned, and where priests are not abducted, is invited to a simple two-fold invitation: pray for the missions and support them financially if you can.



Seminarians and leaders of the Nigerian Bigard Memorial Seminary in Enugu are pictured March 1, 2024 during the 24th matriculation ceremony for the philosophy department. (OSV News photo/courtesy Bigard Memorial Seminary)

MISSION MESSAGE



By Shannon Ruiz
Diocesan Director,
Pontifical Mission
Societies

Praying Our Way Through October: The World Mission Rosary

World Mission Sunday calls every baptized Catholic to share in the Church's mission, and that call continues long after October 18th. This October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, I invite you to keep the spirit of mission alive by praying the World Mission Rosary.

Each of the five decades is offered for a different continent, represented by its own color: green for Africa, red for the Americas, white for Europe, blue for Oceania, and yellow for Asia. Together, these colors lift up the entire world in prayer.

In praying this Rosary, you stand alongside missionaries, catechists, and faithful communities around the globe who rely on our prayers as much as our financial support. Pray it on your own, with your family, or with your parish.

If you have never prayed the World Mission Rosary, this month is a wonderful time to start. To make it as easy as possible, the Pontifical Mission Societies has been offering a livestream every day this month at 3 p.m. and you are invited to join. Simply click on the QR code on the graphic to sign up and you'll get an email with the daily livestream link so you can pray the rosary with them from wherever you are!

May Our Lady, Queen of Missions, intercede for all who carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth!



WORLD MISSION ROSARY

Pray the Rosary with Us

This October, the Pontifical Mission Societies invite you to join us for a special rosary as we observe World Mission Month. Each day in October, we will gather via **livestream** to pray the World Mission Rosary at 3 p.m. (Eastern Time).

Archbishop Sheen designed the World Mission Rosary so that every Catholic — no matter where they lived — could hold up the whole world in prayer. Every day of October, join us to do exactly that.



For more
information

[PONTIFICALMISSIONS.ORG/WMS-2026](https://pontificalmissions.org/WMS-2026)

FIND THE LIVESTREAM HERE



Pray and Give Generously on. . . . World Mission Sunday

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300 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503

Prayer of Pope Leo XIV

for the 100th World Mission Sunday 2026

Holy Father, make us one in Christ, rooted in his love that unites and renews. May all members of the Church be united in mission, docile to the Holy Spirit, courageous in bearing witness to the Gospel, proclaiming and daily embodying your faithful love for all creatures.

Bless all missionary men and women, support them in their efforts, and watch over them in hope!

Mary, Queen of Missions, accompany our work of evangelization in every corner of the earth: make us instruments of peace, and grant that the whole world may recognize in Christ the light that saves.

Amen.

pontificalmissions.org

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