



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of the Bishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We celebrate World Mission Sunday on October 18th this year. This annual, worldwide Eucharistic celebration emphasizes our shared baptismal call to mission.

Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday, implores us, “In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: “Here I am, send me” (6:8). This is the ever-new response to the Lord’s question: ‘Whom shall I send?’ This invitation from God’s merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity, in the current world crisis.”

During the Mission Month of October, Pope Francis reminds us that, as baptized Christians, we are called personally to mission – especially at this time – to bring Christ’s love to those most forgotten around the world. Jesus is God the Father’s own Missionary; He asks us to respond to this call to mission, this invitation to “step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbor.” What will your answer be? “Here I Am, Send Me” is the response we will all endeavor to live out this World Mission Sunday, through prayer, participation in the Eucharist, and generosity to the collection for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Through the Pope’s own missionary society, you too can be sent out to all the ends of the earth – sent through your support of missionaries and those they serve. Your gifts sustain priests, religious and lay pastoral leaders in more than 1,100 mission dioceses in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and parts of Latin America and Europe as they proclaim the Gospel, build the Church, and serve the poor. With them, you answer, “Here I Am, Send Me.”

This year, in response to the challenges to the Mission Church from the pandemic, I encourage you to respond in the most generous way you are able. As you do, I offer my sincere personal gratitude for your kind missionary heart, reaching out in love throughout Mission Month.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak
Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown

For more about World Mission Sunday, please visit missio.org/resources for additional materials