



PRESS RELEASE

Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019: Events Scheduled in Rome

Three major events mark the days of the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019. Pope Francis made the announcement during the Angelus on October 22, 2017 "with the aim of fostering ardour in the Church's 'ad gentes' evangelizing activity." In his Message for the World Mission Day 2019, the Holy Father wrote: "For the month of October 2019, I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment." In doing so, the Holy Father wanted to "commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV" (November 30, 1919).

"Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again," said Pope Francis. The theme of the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019 is "Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world." Missions is the way by which God offers faith to mankind.

Tuesday, October 1st at 6 p.m. in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, the Holy Father Francis will preside over the celebration of Vespers which opens the Extraordinary Missionary Month. October 1st is the day when the Church remembers Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, canonized by Pius XI on May 17, 1925 and proclaimed two years later the universal patron of missions, along with St. Francis Xavier. The celebration will be introduced by the Missionary Vigil at 5:15 p.m. and will then proceed with missionary testimonies.

Monday, October 7th at 3:00 p.m. at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, Cardinal Filoni will lead the international rosary prayer in memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary. The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Mission Societies have invited Radio Maria to organize the event. This event will have global coverage, broadcast live on nearly 80 radio and video stations by Radio Maria. Radio Maria's volunteers and staff have been working for months to guarantee success of the event, which will be a great source of inspiration for each of us, for our families and for the world.

Lastly, on Sunday, October 20th, the World Mission Day will be celebrated throughout the world. Pope Francis wrote in the message sent out in anticipation of the anniversary:

“The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God’s own eyes and heart.” The Holy Father continued, “Hope opens us up to the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share. Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth” (see Mi 5.3; Mt 28.19; At 1.8; Rom 10.18).

A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion,”said Pope Francis. The Holy Father continued, “how many saints, how many men and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness, this going forth in mercy, is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness (cf.2 Cor 5:14-21)! The man who preaches God must be a man of God (cf. Maximum Illud).

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission.

People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God’s love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God’s love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life (cf. Eph 1:3-6).”

Pope Francis will preside over the Eucharistic celebration on World Mission Day at 10:30 a.m. in St. Peter's Square.

ACCREDITATION

All journalists and media operators who intend to participate must apply, no later than 24 hours before the event, through the Holy See Press Office online Accreditation System, available at: press.vatican.va/accreditamenti

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October
2019

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