



TO SOW
IS TO
LOVE.

Leaflet - 1

Theme for World Mission Sunday 2014

To sow is to love: Grow in love! (Mk 4:1-20)

“Our own times offer new opportunities to the Church in this field: The collapse of oppressive ideologies and political systems; the opening of frontiers and the formation of a more united world due to a development in communications; the affirmation among peoples of the evangelical values that Jesus incarnated in his own life (peace, justice, brotherhood, concern for the needy); a type of soulless economic and technical development that only urges the search for the truth about God, about man and about the meaning of life itself. God opens to the Church, the horizons of a humanity more prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I feel that the moment has come to invest all the Church's strength for the new evangelization and the mission ad gentes. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.” (Redemptoris Missio, 3)

World Mission Sunday is an annual event that is essential for the growth of the poorest dioceses in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Eastern Europe and South America. It allows the Universal Church to “*renew her missionary commitment*”. (RM, 2) It is above all, the occasion in which all Catholics redefine themselves within the essential project that Christ entrusted to his disciples on Pentecost: “*Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.*” (Mt 28:19-20)

We don't ignore the negative tensions and tendencies that we experience within the churches of Christian traditions such as Canada. For many of our brothers and sisters, the “*ad gentes missio*” is not a concern anymore. “*This tendency is certainly not in line with the directives of the Council and subsequent teachings of the Magisterium. Internal and external difficulties have weakened the Church's missionary zeal towards non-Christians, and this is a fact that all believers in Christ should worry about. Indeed, in the history of the Church, the missionary zeal has always been a sign of vitality, just as its weakening is a sign of a crisis of faith.*” (RM 2)

The Church is essentially missionary

The Church is a community of people deeply-rooted within a history and culture. In accordance with their particular charisma, they commit themselves in following Christ and proclaiming his love message. The Second Vatican Council presented the Church's missionary identity within the Trinitarian Mystery well. Founded by the Trinitarian love for Humanity and Christ's life, the Church continues to follow our paths. This mystery made visible by Christ and to which the Church of the baptized is the visible sign and instrument. The universal Church as well as the local Church, is essentially missionary by nature and she must remain faithful to the Lord's mandate. Animated by the Holy Spirit, not only she must go “*to*” the boundaries, but also, she must live “*in*” the “*world's peripheries*” in order to experience Christ's mission with other people.

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The “ad gentes missio”

Even in a context of poverty and restructuration, the local Church cannot close its doors to the Lord's mandate as well as to the “ad gentes missio”. “*Make the tent you live in larger...* (Isa 54: 2). To broaden one's horizons and leave behind our own boundaries, with the purpose of proclaiming and sowing the Word of God, suggests openness to others. It suggests an interior movement, “ad intra” and an exterior movement, “ad extra”, in order to inhabit a different space, either geographical or social. To do everything possible implies a cultural shift that creates a new way to do things and to experience the Communion.

The “ad gentes missio” refers to the passage in which the Lord sends out his disciples: “*Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples*” (Mt 28:19). Our mission is to become missionary disciples on a permanent mission and also humble sowers of the Word of God in order to love as Jesus did, humbly and poorly. This mission involves communicating with other worlds, cultures and peoples; it also implies to accompany them in building a better world. Thus, the “ad gentes missio” is mainly the work of a sower “*who went out to sow grain*” and proclaim the Good News. In our context of indifference and atheism, the “ad gentes missio”, which requires the contemplation of the actual world and prayer, emphasizes this permanent mission at the heart of the world: disciples sent towards our poorest brothers and sisters in order to proclaim and experience the Word of God.

“Once there was a man who went out to sow grain” (Mark 4:1-20)

This parable is intended for crowds and it is used for the disciple's teachings. Jesus is the master of parables. The parable of the Sower is included between two invitations: “*Listen!*” (Mk 4:3) and “*Listen, then, if you have ears!*” (Mk 4:9) This story is based on nature and everyday life; it gives pause for thought on the strength of the Word of God. After three more or less good soils, the Word shows all its strength: “*the plants sprouted, grew, and bore grain: some had thirty grains, others sixty, and others one hundred.*” (Mk 4:8) The transforming power of the Word of God invites us to have Faith and Hope. This parable focuses on the one who listens and hears the word resonate within his heart. He's the soil that receives the grain. The grain being the Gospel, we are questioned about how we welcome it in our lives. This parable makes us see God's heart. What are the obstacles that prevent me from listening?

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A parable that talks to us

In order to proclaim the Gospel, we must “go out” like the sower and walk on the world's paths. It is the action of sowing that will open new paths to the Gospel; enliven God's gifts that we have within us and grant the one who “listens”, to become a witness and disciple, missionary of the Word of God, without expecting anything in return except the grace of love that gives life. In this way, God does his work. The Word takes root and bears fruit, “*some had thirty grains, others sixty, and others one hundred*”. It is a parable of hope and life. It states the faith and hope in God's love that acts in silence with the purpose of growing new life. It is a parable that talks to the most vulnerable people of our world. How do I listen to the Word of God, with which ears?

Openings

People are hungry and thirsty of a consoling word that encourages and changes life. The Church is becoming more and more “catholic”, in other words, she's becoming “universal”. She is beautiful because of the men and women in all continents and all the cultures that compose her. The first disciples, Peter, Luke, Matthew, John and the others, as well as the first communities of believers were sent throughout the world on Pentecost and, despite the persecutions, the revolts, the martyrdoms, the atheisms and agnosticisms, and all the political-media attacks, the Word of God that was proclaimed, bore fruit. The world has never been more religious and in search than our own times. The Bell Center and Internet have replaced the Temple and the paths of Palestine, but Jesus is the same Lord. There are always receptive people who are willing to accept the Word that changes life. It is up to us to sow! What kind of soil am I? What fruits will I grow and bear?

“The sower went out to sow and to love.” Lord, help me become a fertile soil. To sow is to love!

Have a great World Mission Sunday!