

BULLETIN 32 – 18TH OCTOBER 2020

My dear Brother and Sisters,

In this time of international turmoil and uncertainty, World Mission Sunday is an opportunity for the global family of the Catholic Church to stand together in solidarity, prayer and faith.

Each parish throughout the world celebrates being part of a worldwide Church, giving what they can for the benefit of those most in need. We offer the hand of friendship and encouragement to our sisters and brothers in poorer countries, and to missionaries across the world who are proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard it.

It is clear that the needs of the Church in Africa and Asia are greater than ever. Missio receive many requests from Bishops, Priests and Religious for help so that they can continue serving their people. They ask for prayers and support. Any help we can give them at the moment will make a huge difference to their lives and to the future of our Church.

Pope Francis encourages us to hope and trust in the Lord. In his [message for World Mission Sunday](#), he reminds us that 'in a context profoundly marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not be discouraged because mission is not the fruit of human capacity but belongs to God. He sent his Son Jesus Christ and today he sends every baptised person.'

God bless you all
Fr. John

PS As from this weekend I am now resident in the Presbytery.

TIMES OF MASS AND OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

| | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Sun | 18 | 29 th of the year | 10:00 Mass | People of the Parish |
| | | | 18:00 Mass | Missio |
| Tue | 20 | feria | 10:30 | Rosary |
| Wed | 21 | feria | 10:00 Mass | Patrick McGee (Anniv) |
| Thu | 22 | St. John Paul 2 | 10:00 Mass | Ann Ellis (Anniv) |
| | | | 10:20 | Adoration |
| Fri | 23 | St. John Capistrano | 10:00 Mass | Christina Minou (INT Health) |
| | | | 10:20 | Stations |
| Sun | 25 | 30 th of the year | 10:00 Mass | People of the Parish |
| | | | 18:00 Mass | June & Arthur Collins (RIP) |

GOSPEL REFLECTION

John was critically ill. His parents, Titus and Blessing, unable to prevent a dog biting him, recognised that he needed urgent medical help and walked for two days to the hospital, carrying John on their backs for the entire distance. People saw John's symptoms of rabies and avoided the family in the isolated African fishing villages through which they trekked. In their limited medical knowledge, the

villagers blamed evil spirits and were frightened of the consequences of approaching the suffering family.

Many mission hospitals cannot afford to keep anti-rabies vaccine on standby in case of need. It's expensive and must be kept cool, a real problem in places with uncertain or non-existent electricity. The Sisters at the hospital tried to contact other medical facilities within a range of several hundred miles. Some could only be reached via a walkie-talkie radio. There was no Internet connection in the area and telephones rarely worked. With John's condition rapidly deteriorating, the situation was increasingly desperate. At last, a distant Salvation Army hospital responded via the radio. They would give John their only dose of vaccine. To send it by road would take at least eight hours. Instead, they had contacted a Lutheran volunteer pilot with Mission Medic-Air. He would fly the vaccine to the mission hospital's grass landing strip if someone could meet the six-seater plane in two hours' time. Blessing sat, ignoring the risks to herself, with John on her knee, refusing to let go of her child. Sadly, it was too late and John died even as one of the Sisters prepared the injection which, a few hours earlier, might have saved his life.

In today's Gospel, Jesus' enemies tried to trap him with a clever question about whether or not to pay taxes. Whichever answer he gave could lead to his ultimate downfall. Despite the flattery with which they tried to ensnare Jesus, the Pharisees saw themselves as the religious elite to which he could never belong. How dare an uneducated carpenter from Galilee tell *them* how to live!

The Pharisees and Herodians were not concerned about the legitimacy of taxation: they just wanted to get rid of Jesus, who was "not one of us". Likewise, they saw the Romans as "them" and not "us": foreigners with a different language, way of life and religious beliefs. There was an unbridgeable divide: "they" could never be the same as "us". True, the Romans had occupied Israel and had created their own "them and us" situation which fostered hatred and dissent rather than respect and unity, but Jesus' questioners had no intention of healing the divisions between the two peoples. They only wanted to trap him and did not look for a sincere answer to their question. They were unprepared for Jesus' suggestion that the only conflict of interests lay in their own hearts.

Today is World Mission Sunday, when Catholics across the world unite in praying for and supporting the Church in countries where it is new or young. "Mission" is not about a "them and us" situation. That Saturday afternoon, as Catholic Sisters tried to obtain anti-rabies vaccine for a sick child, the Salvation Army willingly donated all they had; the Lutheran pilot gave up his day off to fly several hundred miles. Three Christian denominations and people of several nationalities did all that they could to help one little boy. Ignoring their many differences, everyone concerned was "us" – including a family whom neither the pilot nor the Salvation Army team would ever know.

Pope Francis told a true story: "It happened here in Rome that a homeless man had an abdominal pain... he went to a priest, the priest saw him and was moved. He said: 'I'll take you to the hospital but I want you to do me a favour. When I start explaining what you have, act like you're fainting'... He did well because it was peritonitis. This man had been discarded. If he had gone alone, he would have been discarded, and he would have died." World Mission Sunday is about forgetting differences and, instead, coming together. Jesus' challengers could not look beyond "them and us". The Pharisees discarded the Romans and Jesus because they were "them" and not "us". Jesus reminds us to look inside our hearts. World Mission Sunday tells us that, as Christians, there is no such thing as "them and us". We discard nobody.

Contact Details –

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