



Ordine della Madre di Dio

P A X C H R I S T I

Communion generates mission

Dear Confrères,

Missionary October reaches us this year at a particularly significant moment for the whole Church. On Sunday, 18 October, we will celebrate the 100th World Mission Sunday, and Pope Leo XIV proposes to us a theme that contains a profound question concerning our Christian life: “One in Christ, united in mission.”

One hundred years of World Mission Sundays remind us that mission is not one activity among the many that the Church carries out. It is what reveals her very identity. The Church exists so that the Gospel received may become the Gospel given; so that the love encountered in Christ may not remain something kept for ourselves, but may reach other men and women.

Perhaps precisely here we can find a point of reflection for our journey during this month.

A Christian community, a religious family, each one of us can run the risk of being very concerned about what we must preserve and less concerned about what we must generate. We can preserve structures, traditions, customs, activities, even a precious spiritual heritage, and yet forget that all this has been entrusted to us not so that we may retain it, but so that through us it may continue to bear fruit.

Mission begins when what we have received ceases to be ours alone.

Saint John Leonardi lived precisely this dynamic. The charism he received did not become for him a reality to be defended, but a grace to be placed at the service of the Church. His passion for formation, for the reform of Christian life, for the proclamation of the Gospel and for ecclesial communion arose from the conviction that faith, when it is truly encountered, always generates a movement towards the other.

For us too, then, being missionaries does not first of all mean doing something extraordinary or going far away. It means asking ourselves whether what God has accomplished in us is still able to reach someone through us.

Mission can begin with an open door, with a community capable of welcoming, with a confrère listened to patiently, with a young person accompanied in his vocation, with a word of the Gospel spoken at the right moment, with a faithful presence beside someone who is going through a time of trial. It can take different forms, according to the places and responsibilities that each one carries, but it always preserves the same logic: to receive from Christ and to give to others what we have received from Him.

Within this journey there is also the Canonical Visitation that will accompany our Order in the coming months. In the message announcing it, we welcomed the theme “Examine



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yourselves” (2 Cor 13:5). It will also be a missionary opportunity: a time to open the doors of our communities, to meet one another, to listen to one another and to share the riches and the difficulties of the different realities of the Order. Thus we will be able to experience that communion among us is not merely something to be preserved, but a strength that makes us more available for mission.

Communion, in fact, is not the opposite of mission: it is its source. Pope Leo XIV, in his Message for World Mission Sunday, reminds us that from our being united to Christ flow reciprocal communion and missionary fruitfulness. Being “one in Christ” means becoming a community capable of witnessing in the world to the reconciling power of the Gospel.

When we learn to walk together, we become more capable of going out to meet others. When we stop living turned in upon our individual realities, our gaze broadens and becomes capable of recognizing the needs of the Church and of the world.

It is a perspective that challenges us. Our mission does not depend only on the number of works that we are able to sustain, the activities that we are able to organize, or the places in which we are present. It depends above all on the quality of the evangelical life with which we inhabit those places. A community may have many activities and little mission; it may have few activities and, instead, be profoundly missionary. Because mission is not measured first of all by how much we do, but by how much our life allows Christ and the salvation that comes from Him alone to shine through.

In this sense, Missionary October can become for each one of us a simple and concrete opportunity to broaden our gaze. The Church is greater than our community, our city, our nation. Every day, in places near and far, men and women proclaim the Gospel, Christian communities grow in faith, young people discover their vocation, and many people are still waiting to be able to encounter Christ.

To think about mission therefore also means remembering that we are not alone. Our prayer, our solidarity, our interest in the missions of the Order and in the younger Churches are concrete ways of participating in the mission of the universal Church. Even a small gift, lived in communion, can become participation in the mission of the Church.

But even before our material offering, there is a gift that all of us can give: our availability.

Availability to allow ourselves to be sent. Availability to go beyond our own patterns. Availability to collaborate. Availability to recognize that the charism we have received does not belong to us. It is a gift of the Spirit for the Church.

In this missionary month, therefore, let us ask the Lord to free us from the temptation of a Christian and religious life turned in upon itself. May He give us a heart capable of looking far, but also eyes capable of recognizing the brother who is beside us. May He make us faithful to our vocation and, precisely for this reason, capable of going beyond ourselves.

May Saint John Leonardi teach us once again that a life entrusted to Christ does not close in upon itself: it becomes a path so that others may encounter Him.



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And may Mary, woman of listening and availability, teach us that simple obedience which transforms a “yes” received from God into a life given to others; the seed of vocation into fruits of charity that make the Church fruitful.

Faternally,

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p. Antonio Piccolo, OMD

Fr. Antonio Piccolo, OMD
Rector General