

Homily of Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 2025

(World Mission Sunday)

Exodus 17:8-13; Psalm 121:1-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8

Today is World Mission Sunday. Pope Pius XI instituted World Mission Sunday in 1926 to be an annual day of prayer and expression of support for the Catholic Church's missionary vision and character. It is a Sunday that is set aside for Catholics all over the world to recommit themselves to the Church's missionary activities through prayer and offering. We are invited, constantly, to pray for the success of the Church's missionary activities in every part of the world. We pray for missionary institutions and missionaries, especially those who work in conflict areas and dangerous places.

We pray for seminaries and religious houses, formators, seminarians, novices, and candidates. We pray that the Lord of the harvest sends more laborers for his harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). We also pray for men and women of goodwill who sacrifice their talents and resources to support God's work in the missions. In addition to our prayers, we are, also, invited to offer material and financial support to the Church's missionary activities. We are all missionaries, either by going to the missions or by praying for missionaries or by giving material and financial support to sustain the missions.

In his message for World Mission Sunday 2025, Pope Leo XIV says, "Our world, wounded by war, violence and injustice, needs to hear the Gospel message of God's love and to experience the reconciling power of Christ's grace. In this sense, the Church herself, in all her members, is increasingly called to be a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word ... and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity.... We are to bring to all peoples, indeed to all creatures, the Gospel promise of true and lasting peace. ... I would conclude by encouraging you to continue to be missionaries of hope among all peoples."

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading that although we are in a world that has become more and more irreligious and more and more opposed to Christian values, the Catholic Church mission must continue to, "Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching." We pray for the grace.

While there are missionaries of hope in faraway lands, we are missionaries of hope, love, and joy to one another, especially to the "wounded" and the needy.

The first reading tells us about the mission before Israel. The mission was to defeat Amalek in order to continue their journey to the Promised Land. We can see the division of labor for the mission. Joshua and the soldiers went to the warfront for the physical battle. Moses and two men climbed to the top of the hill for the spiritual battle. "As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, however, grew tired; so they took a rock and put it under him and he sat on it. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady until sunset" when Joshua and the Israelites defeated the Amalekites (Exodus 17:11-12). This event speaks of the power of prayer; and the importance of persistent and enduring prayer. It speaks also of the importance of spiritual warfare to accompany all our material engagements.

Jesus gave a parable in today's gospel to teach us the importance of persistent and enduring prayer. The widow never gave up appealing to the dishonest judge until she received justice. Jesus assures us, "Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily" (Luke 18:7).

Every important mission has 'Amalekites' (challenges) in its way. What are the 'Amalekites' in the way to our 'Promised Land' (goal)? Let us not be frightened and discouraged by the 'Amalekites' as to abandon our mission. Let us not give up. Let us battle bravely like Joshua and the soldiers, but like Moses engage in spiritual warfare until the 'Amalek' is conquered. Let us persevere like the widow in today's gospel. Someone says, "A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian." St. Augustine puts it this way, "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." As we work hard and pray hard, may God grant us success. Amen.

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