

Families Must Be Missionaries

Following are excerpts from Pope John Paul II's letter on Mission Sunday 1981.

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

World Mission Day is an important event in the life of the Church; in fact, I would say that its importance is always growing.



We have in World Mission Day an excellent occasion for an examination of conscience with regard to our missionary obligation, and for reminding all the faithful of the Church, whatever be their function or place, that each one is involved in this duty.

We must all meditate on the forceful texts of the Second Vatican Council which affirm that the whole Church is missionary, that the work of evangelization is the fundamental duty of the People of God (Ad Gentes, 35), and that every follower of Christ has his part to play in the obligation of spreading the faith (Lumen Gentium, 17). It is necessary to turn back repeatedly to the teaching of the Council, as found in so many of its documents and studied in depth by the Synod of Bishops (1974), and synthesized, by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi." If I invite you once again to turn to these documents, so frequently quoted, it is because I am convinced of their importance and the necessity to study them more profoundly.

World Mission Day gives each of us the opportunity of making an examination of conscience on this matter, and of presenting to the People of God the doctrine of the Church. In fact, it is the future of the evangelization of the world that is at stake. If all Christians were convinced of their missionary duty, the difficulties would be less burdensome.

In this sense, it is reason for great hope to see that small Christian communities, dynamic and open, are multiplying in the world; they have understood their own responsibility to announce the Gospel, a pledge for the promotion of a better world.

A further phenomenon which makes us happy and for which we must thank God is the birth of a missionary movement in the young Church, which, from being evangelized, become evangelizers. In many mission countries, the number of missionaries who go forth to preach the Gospel to non-Christians, whether it be in their own country or in other countries, or even other continents, grows day by day. In fact, in every continent, one finds missionaries who have come from all parts of the world.

Thus the young Churches, who in their turn have become missionary, give proof of their maturity in the faith. They have understood that a particular Church, if it is not missionary, is not fully catholic. In fact, if the whole Church is to be missionary, so must each individual Church: These are "... fashioned after the model of the Universal Church in and from such individual Churches, there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church" (Lumen Gentium, 23). A Church closed in on itself, without a missionary openness, is an incomplete and "sick" Church. The example of missionary awareness set by the young Churches should bring home this truth to the older Churches, which, after having developed an admirable effort, seem at times to have abandoned themselves to discouragement and doubts about their missionary obligations.

It devolves upon the pope to remind all his brothers in Christ of this missionary obligation. Inasmuch as he is Supreme Shepherd of a Church which is totally missionary, he must be the first line missionary, endeavoring to imitate the example of Christ, "... the very first and the greatest evangelizer" placing himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, "... the principal agent of evangelization."

Following the example of my predecessor, Paul VI, I have undertaken numerous journeys to many countries, in some of which Christ is barely known, or the missionary proclamation of the Gospel as yet incomplete. My journeys in Latin America, in Africa, and in Asia had "... an eminently religious and missionary purpose" as I said at the time of my leaving for Africa.

I wanted to preach the Gospel myself, making myself in a way, an itinerant catechist; and I desired to encourage all those who are at the service of the Gospel, whether in their own country, or whether they

have come from other countries and continents, to put themselves at the service of a local Church.

Calling on the cooperation of all for missionary work, I would like to speak above all to the Christian family. In our day, we need to give back to the family, with its vitality and stability, its place of importance. What is true on the human level — that is, that the family is the basic cell of society, the foundation on which it is built — is also true of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church; and for this reason, the Council called the family "the domestic Church." Thus, the evangelization of the family is the principal aim of pastoral activity, and this will not attain its full scope if Christian families themselves do not become evangelizers and missionaries. This deepening of the personal, spiritual awareness brings about, that each — parents and children — will have their own proper role and their own importance for the Christian life of every other member of the family.

Undoubtedly, both at the religious as well as at the human level, any action taken depends on the awareness that parents have of their own responsibility and on their Christian values. It is to parents, then, above all, that I would like to speak. By their words and by the testimony of their lives, parents are the first catechists of their children; this is very clear in the teaching of the Apostolic Exhortation "Catechesi Tradendae." In this catechetical activity, prayer should have the place of honor; and you will allow me to insist on this point. Despite the wonderful renewal we see here and there, prayer continues to be difficult for most Christians, who pray little. They ask: Of what use is prayer? Does it fit in with our modern concept of efficiency? Is there not something paltry in responding to the material and spiritual needs of the world with prayer?

In the face of these difficulties, we must show unflinchingly that Christian prayer is inseparable from our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; from our faith in His love and His redeeming power, operative in the world. Therefore, the prayer that is most important for us: "Lord, increase our faith!" It has as its aim our conversion; that is, as St. Cyprian already explained, interior and exterior availability, the will to open oneself to the transforming action of grace. "In saying: Hallowed My Thy name, we ask repeatedly, since we have been sanctified by Baptism, to persevere in what we have begun to be ... Thy Kingdom come: praying that the Kingdom of God be realized in us in the sense that we beg that His name be sanctified in us ... Then we add: Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, so that we may be able to do what God wants ... The will of God is that which Christ did and taught."

Authenticity of prayer implies authenticity of life: prayer is at the same time the cause and the result of a way which orients itself to the light of the Gospel. Thus understood, the prayer of parents, like that of the Christian community, will be for the children an initiation into the search for God and to the attentiveness to His calls. It is in this that the witness of life finds all its importance. It presupposes that children learn already in the family, its importance. It presupposes, too, that in the family the children learn concretely that there are more fundamental preoccupations in life than money, vacations or entertainment! And so the education imparted to the children can open them to missionary dynamism as an integral dimension of the Christian life, if parents and other educators are themselves imbued by a missionary spirit, inseparable from the sense of the Church. By their example, even more than by their words, they will teach their own children to be generous towards those who are weaker, to share their faith and their material goods with children and youth who still do not know Christ, or who are the first victims of poverty and ignorance. Therefore, Christian parents will be able to consider the flowering of a priestly or religious missionary vocation as one of the most beautiful proofs of the authenticity of the Christian education they have given; and they will pray that the Lord will call one of their own children. Missionary solicitude manifests itself as an essential element of the sanctity of the Christian family. As my venerable predecessor, John Paul I affirmed: "Through family prayer, the 'domestic Church' becomes an effective reality and leads to the transformation of the world. And all the efforts of parents to instill God's love into their children and to support them by the example of their faith, constitute a most relevant apostolate for the 20th century."

On this occasion, I would like to recommend to parents and to all Catholic educators an important work, instituted more than a century ago (1843) for assisting them in the missionary education of their children; one which places adequate means at their disposal. I refer to the Pontifical Association of the

Holy Childhood, which has as its aim the furthering of the missionary spirit among children.

JOHN CANEPA AGENCY

General Insurance

"dependable protection"
"personal service"

call
John Canepa

or
Jim Miller

266-5225

1134 Titus Avenue

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
"As Seasons Change"

We have all watched the seasons change year after year -- and yet, each time, we are able to appreciate the beauty as though we had never seen it before. Fall -- with its brilliant colors, crisp days and promise of winter, a resting period for all life. We become accustomed to the unfolding of each year -- and it becomes a part of a natural life process that we expect to continue forever. And life does continue -- in many forms. But perhaps a life that you loved best, that was very dear to you, has ended -- and you feel the emptiness that comes with that loss. You know that you are not alone; that there are many who have experienced a similar grief that they once felt was unbearable. And the time will come when you, too, can pick up the pieces and take up your own life again. Making yourself aware of nature -- its beauty and its continuance -- can be a comfort during a time of great sadness. Enjoy fall -- share its beauty with someone who may need your help or comfort. Helping someone else is one of the best ways to help yourself.

SCHAUMAN FUNERAL HOME

2100 St. Paul St. HOME 342-3400

"Today, — as never before in the history of our Court System, — a Family Court Judge must be prepared to deal with Civil and Criminal case loads as well as handling his own Family Court responsibilities! With a legal career that spans

over 30 years in our community, — Judge Leonard Maas has wide experience in all courts of law!"

"FAMILY COURT CAN BE THE TURNING POINT OF A LIFETIME FOR MANY; — LET JUDGE MAAS GIVE THEM THE PROPER DIRECTION!"

KEEP JUDGE LEONARD



MAAS FAMILY COURT JUDGE

RATED SUPERIOR

BY THE HONORABLE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION - DEMOCRAT (NOW 118) Paid for by Citizens for Judge Maas, James B. Doyle Financial Chairman

COURIER
sell out the wit WAN
AUT
1973 CHEVY W needs som 265-0172, evi
BODY & FE Nowak's Col 467-2624.
Cars bought, wanted, S repairs. PAL Ave. 232-849
BROTHER Insurance W 141 Lat 865-5
BAI
REASONABLE Repairs. 352-3447.
BE
OPPO
HOMEWORK money easl time by sim ing envelop Everything l day rush : addressed Dept. 196, F FL 33318.
CARP
ADDITIONS, Change a room. 654-0
Carpenter w enclosures, dows, electi perience. I Check our BROTHERS 227-4635.
CARPENTRY, Inside trim, locks and d 872-1205.
REASONABLE Small repa tions. 352-3
CARPENTER: specialist. 25 years 225-1848 at
CHIN
CHIMNEYS plastered, r town. 28 estimates. DINapoli 225-7681, 2
REASONABLE Repairs, ret
HOUSECLEA on weekly, visits. We d ing and fu estimates. 225-5865. t available.
DRAPERIES, spreads, ct treatment.