



The Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019 **Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World**

Pope Francis announced the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, on the propagation of the faith throughout the world.

He chose the theme "Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World" with the aim of awakening awareness of the *missio ad gentes* (mission to nations), and reinvigorating our sense of responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel with new enthusiasm. But how can we take on this responsibility in our daily lives? His Holiness has specified four dimensions in which we can live out the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019:

- A personal encounter with Jesus Christ alive in His Church through the Eucharist, the Word of God, personal and communal prayer;
- Testimony: missionary saints, martyrs and confessors of the faith, as an expression of the Church scattered throughout the world;
- Missionary formation: biblical, catechetical, spiritual and theological;
- Missionary charity.

Prayer, our first missionary work

Pope Francis describes prayer as the first missionary work — one that every Christian can, and must, carry out. Pray in a particular way this month for all our missionaries, those that serve overseas as well as our international priests who have left home to serve us here in the Archdiocese.

The Holy Father proposes this prayer for the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019:

Heavenly Father,

when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he commissioned his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations" and you remind us that through our Baptism we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be courageous and zealous in bearing witness to the Gospel, so that the mission entrusted to the Church, which is still very far from completion, may find new and efficacious expressions that bring life and light to the world.

Help us make it possible for all peoples to experience the saving love and mercy of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Testimony

The saints serve as models of missionary discipleship for us. This month, take a little time to learn about a particular saint, look for lessons in their life, and seek their intercession. Here are two Canadian examples:

St. André of Montreal (Brother André Bessette)

Alfred Bessette grew up in a family of 12 children in Quebec. At 21, he dedicated himself to a life in ministry with the Congregation of the Holy Cross, taking the name Brother André. He was assigned to the rather humble position of porter at Notre Dame College, a role he had for 40 years. Many who met him told of his compassion for sick, disabled, and chronically ill people. He would pray with them, invoking the intercession of St. Joseph. By the time he was about 30, people began to attribute extraordinary favours and healings to his prayers. His reputation spread throughout Montreal and many brought their sick relatives to see the College doorkeeper. Eventually his congregation purchased the mountain property across the street from the College, which would become the renowned pilgrimage site of St. Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal. On October 17, 2010, Brother André was canonized. This missionary to the sick is the patron saint of family caregivers. More information on St. André can be found at saint-joseph.org/en/spirituality/saint-brother-andre.

St. Marguerite d'Youville

Imagine growing up in poverty and then suffering the loss of a father, husband and four of six children, all by the age of 30. This was the life of St. Marguerite in 18th-century Quebec. But instead of despair, she committed herself to helping those less fortunate, beginning by bringing a blind woman into her home. She soon attracted other like-minded women, and in 1737 they consecrated themselves to God and promised to serve Him in the person of the poor. These dedicated women became the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, commonly called the "Grey Nuns." They became formally involved in caring for the sick in 1747, when they took over the administration of a struggling Montreal hospital. In 1990, Marguerite was canonized by Pope John Paul II, becoming the first native-born Canadian to be declared a saint.

Today her legacy of hospitality and compassionate care is lived at Catholic health-care centres, nursing homes, clinics, and children's centres here and around the world. More information on St. Marguerite can be found at sgm.qc.ca/en/saint-marguerite-dyouville.

Missionary Formation

What does it take to become a missionary? Here are some ideas: Pray each day. Join a Bible study group. Take a course or seminar at Newman Theological College. Use the online catechetical resources offered by your parish. Sponsor an RCIA candidate. Attend ecumenical or interfaith events. Go on a mission trip to a developing country.

Missionary Charity

Consider making a gift to a missionary organization; these are just a few:

- Pontifical Missions in Canada — includes Pontifical Missionary Union, Holy Childhood Association, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Society of St. Peter the Apostle
- Catholic Missions in Canada – serves 25 dioceses in remote and needy areas
- Chalice – sponsors education of individual children in developing countries
- Catholic Near East Welfare Association – offers humanitarian and pastoral support throughout the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe
- Development and Peace – Caritas Canada — serves our sisters and brothers in the Global South as the official development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada
- Marian Centre – offers hot meals, sandwiches, clothing and fellowship in inner-city Edmonton
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul – lay Catholics serving the poor in our midst



The Catholic
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