

“MISSIONARIES OF HOPE...” WITH SAINT THERESA OF LISIEUX

Materials for each attendee: a heart-shaped cardboard, pen, prayer card for World Mission Sunday, Jubilee prayer.

Next to the altar: an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a tray at its feet; an image of Saint Therese; a poster for World Mission Sunday.

Texts from “Dilexit nos”: it is recommended that the numbers indicated (90, 215, 216) be read in their entirety, followed by a minute of silence. These numbers have been reproduced here in extract form.

Observations: the phrases of Saint Therese, *in blue*, should be read by a young woman; it is advisable to introduce some hymns and to begin with the priest’s greeting.

Presenter 1. October is World Mission Month, the main day of which is World Mission Sunday. This month begins with the feast of **Saint Therese of the Child Jesus**, Doctor of the Church and Patroness of the Missions. This year, 2025, marks the centenary of her canonization and her proclamation as Patroness of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, which is concerned with forming vocations in missionary countries.

Presenter 2. Therese, a 24-year-old woman who fully embraced God’s grace, is today a teacher of mission for us. In preparation for World Mission Sunday, and with her as our guide, we will pray together using texts from Pope Francis’ latest encyclical, dedicated to the Sacred **Heart of Jesus**.

Presenter 1. Through the intercession of Saint Therese, we request the Lord’s guidance in becoming “**Missionaries of hope among the peoples**,” and in serving as a “sign of the Heart of Christ and of the love of the Father, embracing the whole world” (Francis).

1. Priest. We place ourselves before the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us take a moment to contemplate the Lord’s Heart, open out of love for us, and also open our hearts to Him with complete trust:

Reader. “As we contemplate the heart of Christ, ... we can, following the example of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, ‘place heartfelt trust not in ourselves but in the infinite mercy of a God who loves us unconditionally and has already given us everything in the cross of Jesus Christ.’ Therese was able to do this because she had discovered in the heart of Christ that God is love: “**To me he has granted his infinite mercy.**” That is why a popular prayer, directed like an arrow towards the heart of Christ, says simply: ‘Jesus, I trust in you.’” (*Dilexit nos*, 90).

Presenter 1. What has the Heart of Jesus given me? How has His mercy been manifested in my life? (*Silence.*) After contemplating His love for me, what do I feel called to give to Jesus?

(Everyone writes a personal response on his/her **cardboard heart**. Each adds, “I trust in you,” at the end. Then he/she can leave it in front of the image of the Heart of Jesus.)

Presenter 2. Lord, may I be able to recognize and listen to your voice in my heart and say, like Saint Therese: **“O Jesus, my Love..., my vocation, at last I have found it!... In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love.”**

2. Priest. The Lord sends us on a mission, calling us and drawing us with His love...

Presenter 2: **“A soul that is burning with love cannot remain inactive”; “All the souls whom she loves follow in her train.”**

Priest. We ask Jesus in the Eucharist to embrace us in His love, so that we may pass this love on to others.

(There is now a procession and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After a while, the following is read.)

Reader: “Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good, perhaps as a physician, a mother, a teacher or a priest. Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realize that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission. He himself told us, ‘I am sending you out’ (Lk 10:3). **[So it is better to let yourself be sent, to let yourself be led by Him wherever He wants].** Never forget that Jesus is at your side every step of the way. He will not cast you into the abyss or leave you to your own devices. ... He has promised, and he will do it: ‘For I am with you always, to the end of the age’ (Mt 28:20)” (*Dilexit nos*. 215).

Presenter 1. To whom, to what, and to where is the Lord sending me? What help do I ask of Him today, here, to enable me to be a "pilgrim of hope" who proclaims Him and brings Him to others?

(Some petitions are spoken aloud. Then, gathering them together, everyone recites the Jubilee Prayer.)

Presenter 2. Lord, may your call to holiness and to live the mission be fulfilled in me, too, with the same desire as Saint Therese: **“To love Jesus and to make Him loved.”**

3. Priest. We now pray for all the missionaries throughout the world. We also pray for the younger Churches, which so desperately need our help, and for the vocations to the priesthood and religious life that are arising within them.

Reader. “In your own way, you too must be a missionary. Saint Therese experienced this as an essential part of her oblation to merciful Love: **‘I wanted to give my Beloved to drink and I felt myself consumed with a thirst for souls.’** That is your mission as well. Each of us must carry it out in his or her own way; you will come to see how you can be a missionary. Jesus deserves no less. If you accept the challenge, he will enlighten you, accompany you and strengthen you. Keep experiencing the joy born of our efforts to share the love of Christ with others” (*Dilexit nos*, 216).

Presenter 1. How can I be a “missionary of hope among the peoples”? How can I help others become missionaries? (*Silence.*)

*(If possible, a missionary may be able to give a **brief testimony**; otherwise, the World Mission Sunday video can be shown.)*

Presenter 2. Lord, we humbly ask that you grant us missionary vocations so that we will be able to proclaim you in every corner of the earth. For them and for us, we humbly join in prayer as Saint Therese did: “**Jesus, allow me to save very many souls.**”

*(We can all together recite the **Prayer for World Mission Sunday** from the prayer sheet. This is followed by **the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be**. Finally, the priest gives the **Benediction** and **dismisses the assembly**.)*

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY PRAYER 2025

Good Father, make us “people of spring,”
with a look always full of hope
to share with everyone.

Help us keep it lit
the flame of that hope,
so that it becomes a big bonfire
that illuminates and gives warmth
to a world overwhelmed by dense shadows.

We pray for the missionaries
who, following your call,
have gone to other nations to make known
the love you have had for us in Christ.

Make them and all of us
missionaries of hope among the peoples,
driven to welcome, like Him and with Him,
the cry of humanity.

We pray to you through Mary,
Mother of Jesus Christ, our hope.

Amen.