



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

World Mission Sunday is fast approaching, and will be observed in every nation on earth on the weekend of October 20-21. This is complemented by the Year of Faith initiated by Pope Benedict XVI, who calls for “renewed energy to the mission of the whole Church to lead men and women out of the desert and toward the place of life: friendship with Christ who gives us fullness of life.” These words express the Church’s ever present missionary nature, the obligation we have to preach Christ to the ends of the earth. This is our priestly and lay mandate; it is what the Church exists to do.

There are in our world more than 1,150 mission dioceses (including some in the U.S.) and territories that depend on annual subsidies from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and on the prayers of all of us. These mission churches provide a spiritual home for the poorest and most vulnerable, sanctifying them with the Sacraments, as they offer the Lord’s hope and peace. There are some 80,000 seminarians preparing for the priesthood, and about 10,000 in formation to serve as religious Sisters or Brothers. Some 10,000 orphanages provide safe shelter to children, and many thousands of medical clinics care for the sick and dying.

As we are in strong relationship with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, through this World Mission Sunday celebration, we connect with the loving work of our great missionaries of every time and every place. It shares directly in the work of the Holy See, not with one mission but with *all* missions of the world. This is true propagation of our faith which, as our Holy Father states, “is the most important gift that has been made to us in our lives and which we cannot keep to ourselves.”

Justo Gonzalez, II, jgonzalez@orlandodiocese.org, our newly appointed Director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, can provide materials to help you prepare your parish for the fullest celebration of World Mission Sunday. Please make evangelization and true mission support your priority especially in the month of October, and my brother priests, as the leader and shepherd of your parish, make a lasting impact for good on the universal missionary work with which is the nature of the Church. On World Mission Sunday and everyday let us all proclaim, “God Has Created Me... I Have a Mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando

For more about this important celebration of the universal Church – and for materials additional information – please visit our new diocesan web site <http://www.orlandodiocese.org/ihaveamission>.