



# ST. PIUS X PARISH

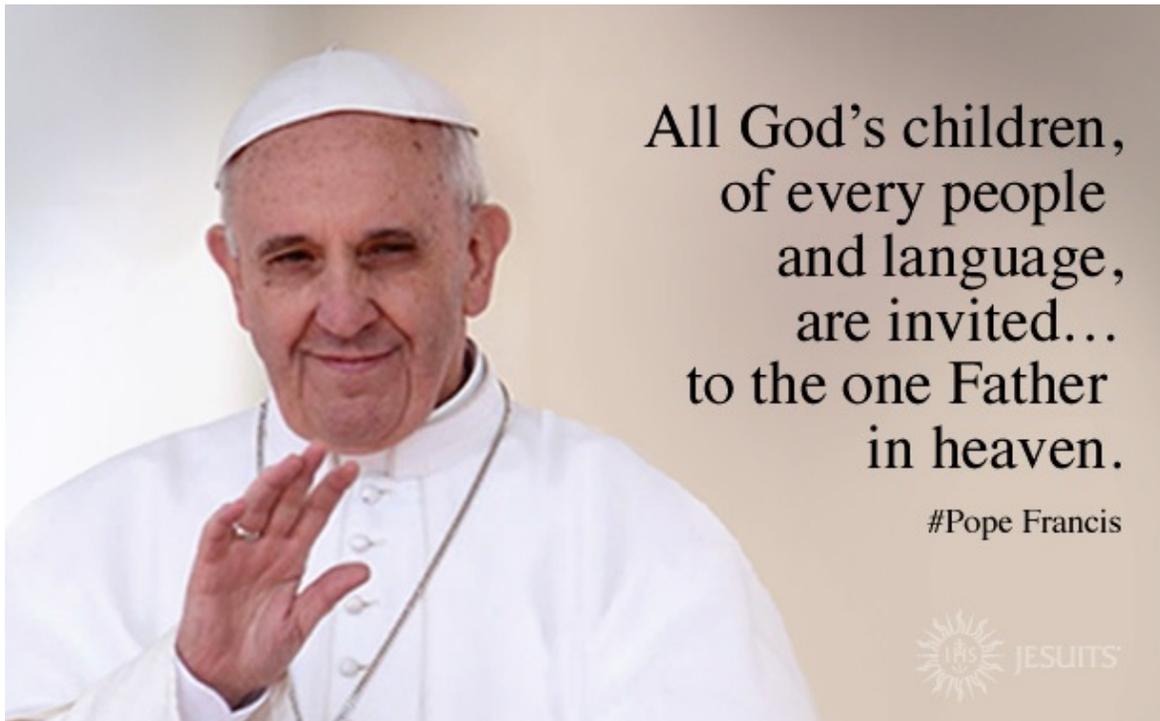
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OUR PIUS UPDATE  
OCTOBER 26, 2021



## BEING MISSIONARIES OF COMPASSION

I am embarrassed to admit it, but my default reaction when passing a homeless person begging on the streets is to ignore them. If they call out asking for help, I'll simply bury myself in my phone, or act distracted looking away.

And, heck, it's not just my response to a person experiencing homelessness. If I have a missed call or text from someone asking me for a favor, I'll often find myself dragging my feet to respond, especially if it requires some extra effort on my part. Have you ever found yourself doing the same?

*"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me!"* The blind man Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus over and over again in the Gospel. The disciples of Jesus don't ignore him (which might have been my strategy). Instead, perhaps even worse, they scold him and tell him to cut it out. Unrelenting, Bartimaeus only continues to yell all the more.

When his cries reach Jesus's ears, he has a completely different response. He stops in his place. He calls for the man. He asks him what he needs. And he grants him his request.

On October 24 the church celebrated **World Mission Sunday**. In his message for today, Pope Francis underscores the urgent need for a mission of compassion, especially in the midst of the pandemic.

Can we respond to that call? Can we be missionaries of compassion in our everyday lives? Rather than ignore or rebuke another, can we follow Jesus's example to stop, notice, ask, and respond when we encounter someone in need? Let that be our mission.

- Fr. Brian Strassburger, SJ, is a member of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province. He was ordained this summer and is helping to meet pastoral needs in the Rio Grande Valley on the U.S.-Mexico border.

### PRAYER

#### Prayer for World Mission Sunday 2021

*O God, Author of all Creation,  
the Apostles and first Christians declared,  
"We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)  
May this be a summons to each of us,  
As we bring to others what we bear in our hearts.  
We recall with gratitude all those men and women who,  
by their testimony of life,  
have helped to inspire us in our baptismal commitment  
to be generous and joyful apostles of the Gospel.  
We recall especially all those who resolutely set out,  
leaving home and family behind,  
to bring the Gospel to all those places and people athirst for its saving message.  
Contemplating their missionary witness,  
inspire us to be courageous in our own lives of faith,  
growing in our openness to embrace everyone, everywhere.  
May we as the Church continue to carry out the mission of evangelization.  
May we go forth to the peripheries of our world as messengers and agents of compassion.  
May we approach the world as Christ does,  
believing with him that those around us are also our brothers and sisters.  
And may Christ's compassionate love touch our hearts and make us all true missionary disciples.  
Amen.*

- Adapted from Pope Francis's Message for World Mission Sunday 2021

SOURCE: [www.JesuitPrayer.org](http://www.JesuitPrayer.org)

## STEPPING OUT OF OUR BOAT AND INTO OUR DREAM



(Image: Canva Pro)

The wind is howling, and the waves are crashing around us. We set sail hours ago but have made little headway with the weather. Although I'm seated comfortably in my den, through imaginative prayer I'm also in the boat with the disciples, battling the weather. Looking out over the water a ghost begins walking towards us, and we shake in fear. My eyes simply don't believe what they're seeing. And a moment later, as the ghost identifies itself as Jesus, and as an absurd question stumbles from Peter's mouth, my ears join their disbelief.

*"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." (Matthew 14:28)*

*What?!*

Although right now no place feels safe, it seems at least logical that we stay in the boat. But apparently this is not what Peter's heart desired. No, despite our fears and these unexplained circumstances, Peter's response to seeing Jesus walk on water is to boldly stand up and request an invitation to join Him.

I tried to continue watching as the scene played out, but my imagination refused to participate. I picked up the Bible and tried to keep reading, but this request from Peter captured my focus, and I could not concentrate as I tried to read on. Each attempt to move forward in the scene, through both my imagination and reading, proved futile. I knew God was inviting me to sit in this space, with this verse, a little longer.

I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised by God's invitation to reflect on this verse. After all, the space between a new idea popping into my head and actually taking that first step to make it happen is often where I get stuck. This is where I hear a quiet voice, one that sounds so much like my own, list the many reasons I should not follow my heart and take action.

Sitting with this verse, picturing Peter as he boldly asked Jesus to invite him out onto the water, I wondered ... Right after this idea popped into his head, but before the words stumbled out of his mouth, did Peter pause? Did he hear a voice, one that sounded much like his own, telling him the idea was ridiculous? Did he hear a voice, filled with logic, listing the reasons his idea would never work? Did he hear a voice, hissing with condemnation, suggesting his idea was clearly rooted in pride? Did he hear a voice, filled with authority, reminding him he lacked the skills and talents required to accomplish this feat? Or did he simply hear a voice whispering that it couldn't be done?

Did he nearly reconsider, choosing instead to remain seated and quiet so others wouldn't know his desire that burned within? Had Peter almost missed his own miracle?

We don't know. The Gospel doesn't give us those details.

But it does show us that after he focused on Jesus and heard His reassuring voice, Peter did speak up. He brought the desire of his heart right to Jesus. And in doing so, he ultimately received an invitation to step out of the boat, bringing his dream to life.

May we always remember that the deepest desires of our hearts are often placed there by the Lord. May we be brave enough to bring these dreams to God in prayer so we can discern whether our desires are in line with God's plan for our lives. May the Lord's voice be ever present in our ears, always drowning out discouragement from the enemy. May our trust in the Lord and His abilities always overshadow our own limitations. And when the Lord invites us to act, may we always be brave enough to step forward, reaching for Jesus, so the dreams He's planted in our hearts can become reality.

SOURCE: [www.catholicmom.com](http://www.catholicmom.com) Jennifer Scheuermann



## THREE WAYS TO MAKE HOPE REAL



Our world needs to hear the message of Christian hope. This hope is not mere optimism; rather Christian hope finds its source in a person, Jesus of Nazareth. St. Thomas Aquinas said hope is, "*infused in us by God alone.*" The universal call of the Church is to be a missionary disciple, to live as one who understands that we are sent forth to make hope real in our world today by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through our words and actions. We are called to notice the needs of others and the needs of our world and serve as messengers of hope.

How can we be messengers of Christian hope—a hope that is infused in us by God—in the world today? Here are three ways:

**First, we notice those who need to hear the message of hope.**

Who does God draw our attention toward? Who in our lives needs to be reminded that we are never alone, we are unconditionally loved, and that God's mercy is infinite? These are the promises of God that infuse us with hope.

**Second, we can bring these needs to God in prayer.**

We turn to God and not only speak to God about what we notice and offer our prayers for those in need, but we also ask God to guide our response. We ask God: What ought we do? God uses what we notice, the gifts given to us, and the desires of our heart to show us how to respond.

**Third, when the path forward is clear about how God is inviting us to respond, we act.**

God raises comforters by giving us the gifts, the desires of the heart, and eventually the means and opportunities to put our gifts and desires into action.

As messengers of hope, we are called to make hope real. Through prayer, we notice where hope is needed and how to respond to that need through concrete action. Maybe God places the idea of checking in on a lonely family member or friend. Maybe God calls us to visit a sick relative or help those without food, drink, clothing, or shelter. Prayer inspires us to perform the spiritual works of mercy and comfort the afflicted, forgive others, pray for someone who is struggling, or encourage the doubtful.

Pope Francis invites each of us to make hope real by comforting those who need comforting: "God the Father comforts by raising comforters, whom he asks to encourage the people, his children" (On Hope, 3). We bring the Good News to others by being visible signs of hope in the world.

How are you a visible sign of hope in the world?

**SOURCE:** [www.ignatianspirituality.com](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com), Becky Eldredge