

## What is World Mission Sunday?

Each year, on the second-to-last Sunday of October, Catholics around the world unite in celebration of **World Mission Sunday**—a day of prayer, reflection, and financial support for the Church's missionary work in **1,124 mission territories**. These are regions where the Church is still young, growing, and often facing poverty, conflict, or persecution.

World Mission Sunday is **not just the occasion of another second collection**. It is **the one Sunday** when the entire Catholic Church—every parish, in every country—comes together to pray for and support the missionary efforts of the Church through **The Society for the Propagation of the Faith**, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies.



## What Is the Society for the Propagation of the Faith?

Founded in 1822 by a young laywoman, **Blessed Pauline Jaricot**, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith was created to support missionaries through **prayer and small weekly offerings**. Pauline's vision was simple: ask friends to give **a penny a week** and pray daily for those bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Her model was adopted by the Church worldwide. In 1922, Pope Pius XI made the Society for the Propagation of the Faith one of **The Pontifical Mission Societies**, placing it under the direct care of the papacy and giving it a central role in funding and sustaining the Church's global mission.

As Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, former National Director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, never ceased to say, the **Church in the United States** would never have grown as fast as it did without the support of the Society. Between 1822 and 1908, American dioceses received the equivalent of more than **\$250 million** in today's dollars to build parishes, schools, and seminaries.

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## Why Does World Mission Sunday Matter?

World Mission Sunday is a **visible sign of Catholic communion and solidarity**. It is our opportunity to respond to Christ's Great Commission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

The collection taken up on this Sunday supports:

- The **formation of seminarians** and future religious sisters and brothers
- The **education of children** in Catholic schools
- **Healthcare and pastoral care** in remote and underserved regions
- The **training of catechists** and lay leaders
- The **construction of churches, chapels, schools** and **mission centers**

When we give, we are not simply making a donation—we are participating in a **spiritual and missionary act of love**, sustaining the Church where it cannot yet sustain itself. And when we pray for the missions, especially during **World Mission Month**, we are united with those bringing Christ's hope to the peripheries of the world.

In this year in which we are celebrating the 1700th anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea and the formulation of the Creed we profess together as a family each Sunday, we cannot help but ponder how each of the four marks of the Church has a missionary thrust to it.

We are **one**, united with our brothers and sisters throughout the world; **holy**, seeking to bring Christ and the means of holiness to everyone; **catholic**, meaning universal and interested in everyone everywhere; and **apostolic**, not just built on the apostles but missionary by nature.

We are therefore, in one sense, never more Catholic than when we are living out Christ's command to go and teach all nations, sharing the treasure of our faith in Jesus. Every October is an opportunity for us to be renewed in our personal and ecclesial missionary identity.