

**PONTIFICAL MISSIONARY UNION
DECEMBER 2021**

(Laity)

**The co-operation in the missionary work required is not simply
a “good work” that can or cannot be done. It is the duty of every
baptized**

(Blessed Paolo Manna)

The missionary co-operation

From the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

“But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.”

(Eph 4:7,11-13)

From the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

“All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the decree of God’s will may be fulfilled. In the beginning God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one (cfr. Jn 11:52).”

(SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 13)

“What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. [...] They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity.”

(SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 31)

“Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God, this sacred synod invites all to a deep interior renewal; so that, having a vivid awareness of their own responsibility for spreading the Gospel, they may do their share in missionary work among the nations.

As members of the living Christ, incorporated into Him and made like unto Him through baptism and through confirmation and the Eucharist, all the faithful are duty - bound to cooperate in the expansion and spreading out of His Body, to bring it to fullness as soon as may be. Therefore, all sons of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility to the world; they should foster in themselves a truly catholic spirit; they should spend their forces in the work of evangelization.”

(SECOND VATICAN. COUNCIL, Decree on the Mission Activity on the Church, *Ad Gentes*, 35-36)

“In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization.”

(POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 119)

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position

in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. [...] Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples.'”

(POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120)

From the writings of Blessed Father Paolo Manna

“Only a missionary Church will save the Faith from the world and thus save herself.”

(P. MANNA, “Le missioni cattoliche”, 1948, p. 147)

“The co-operation of the faithful is an essential factor in the conversion of the infidels.”

(P. MANNA, *The conversion of the pagan world. A Treatise upon Catholic Foreign Missions*, translated and adapted from the Italian of rev. Paolo Manna, M. Ap. by rev. Joseph F. McGlinchey, d.d., Boston, Society for the propagation of the Faith 1921, 175)

“The Pope, the bishops, etc., are the pastors, the rulers, the ministers of the Church. But they alone are not the entire Church. *Church* is a Greek word which signifies an assembly. The Church is the union of all the faithful. It is entire Christendom, together with its pastors. The layman is right in saying that the Pope and bishops have received the mission of converting the world, just as he would be right in saying that the commander-in-chief of a nation and his staff have the mission to fight for the conquest of a country. But just as the

generals alone, without the soldiers, cannot conquer a country, so those who govern the Church, without the faithful, cannot conquer the whole world for Jesus Christ.”

(IBID., 175-176)

“It is an undeniable truth that the faithful have an important, yes, a necessary, part in the apostolic work of the Church. So true is this, that without a widespread activity and continuous co-operation on their part the forces and the zeal of the bishops and the missionaries will accomplish very little.”

(IBID., 177)

“Co-operation in the apostolate of the Church is for Catholics a most strict obligation, a bounden duty.”

(IBID., 181)

“And now to those who cannot become missionaries, I would say if your India is here, may God bless you. But remember — you have obligations also towards the real India, and all countries that are still in darkness. [...] If you cannot go yourself, at least, by every means in your power, especially through prayer and alms, help the missionaries and facilitate the accomplishment of their great work.”

(P. MANNA, *The workers are few. Reflections upon Vocation to the Foreign Missions*, translated from the Italian of rev. Paolo Manna, M. Ap., by rev. Joseph F. McGlinchey, d.d., Boston, Society for the propagation of the Faith 1911, 206)

“The co-operation [in the missionary work] required is not simply a “good work” that can or cannot be done. It is the duty of every baptized.”

(P. MANNA, *I fedeli per gli infedeli*, Milan 1909, 25)

Questions for reflection

- How conscious am I of being a missionary disciple of Jesus?
- How am I part of the missionary work of the Church?
- How often do I ask the Holy Spirit to help me bear witness to Jesus Christ?
- Where is my “India” as a land of mission today?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
 By your Most Holy Blood,
 May the light of truth shine upon all humanity.
 Lead us out of faithlessness and
 Embrace us in mercy.
 Fill the apostles of your Gospel,
 With apostolic zeal,
 So that those who may not yet knew Christ,
 May see in them His Love, and by their ministry,
 Enter the flock of Christ.
 Support the endeavors of all missionaries.
 May their work lead others to the truth, and to love.
 May those who are slow-footed or
 Fearful on their journey of faith,
 Be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.
 Beloved Savior,
 Give missionaries health, optimism, and faith
 That they can may gain strength from your sacrifice on the Cross.
 We ask for special graces on those whose work is hard or burdensome,
 That they may be strengthened by your Spirit,
 As they lovingly proclaim the Gospel
 By what they say,
 And by their service to you.
 May your Holy Church continue to grow

Through the world.

We ask this

In your name,

Jesus our Lord and Redeemer,

Amen.