



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

October, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This year World Mission Sunday will be observed on October 24th. This celebration will also mark the 110th Anniversary of the *Pontifical Mission Societies*. Thanks to the prayers and financial support of the faithful from our local Church, the *Societies* have helped provide for the needs of missionaries world-wide for more than a century.

Our Church's missionary history is a rich one. It is filled with monumental saintly examples we can strive to imitate such as Francis Xavier and Thérèse of Lisieux who serve as Patron & Patroness of the Missions, Damien of Moloka, Kateri Tekakwitha and Daniele Comboni, to name just a few of the many Catholic missionaries who became saints.

Locally, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has long ties to the important work of the Pontifical Mission Societies. We were one of the first places in the United States to designate a local office specifically tasked with supporting missionaries half-a-world away. In 1956, we held one of the largest exhibits of Catholic Missions ever with 500,000 people gathered here to meet 170 missionary groups with Archbishop Fulton Sheen as the keynote speaker.

The international theme for World Mission Sunday this year is, "*Proclaim It with Joy . . . We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard.*" It comes from Acts 4:20 and is a wonderful reflection of the missionary spirit flowing through our Archdiocese. It also summons each of us to bring to others what we bear in our hearts. This Mission has always been the hallmark of the Church, for "*She exists to evangelize.*"

I invite everyone to pray for missionaries around the world this weekend and to provide help as your means allow. Your gifts will support priests, consecrated religious, and lay pastoral leaders in 1,111 Mission Dioceses around the globe as they proclaim the Gospel, build up the Church, and serve the poor.

Thank you for your continuous commitment to Mission throughout our Archdiocese over the years and for your generous response on this special day. As Pope Francis tells us, "*To be on Mission is to be willing to think as Christ does, to believe with him that those around us are also my brothers and sisters.*" May Christ's compassionate love touch our hearts and make us all true Missionary disciples.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson J. Pérez".

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia

Please communicate the contents of this letter, via at the pulpit, bulletin and through all your means of communication, to your parishioners on October 16-17; the collection to be taken October 23-24. For more about this important celebration of the universal Church, please visit our local website at www.phillymissions.org.