

## Final Blessing

May the mission of Jesus be our constant joy

May the Lord help us to share our faith with our brothers and sisters across the world

May he grant us the grace to proclaim his Good News with courage

Amen

# Suggested Homily and Intercessions

18/19 October 2014

29th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

## Introduction

Today's celebration of World Mission Sunday reminds us that we are all called to mission no matter who we are or where we live. On the World Mission Sunday poster you will see a brother and sister from Myanmar (Burma). Missio's campaign focuses on the desperate needs of the 100,000 displaced people, mostly children, living in camps in the north of Myanmar. Today the entire Church unites as one family so that through our prayer and generosity we can reach the whole world with the message of Jesus' love.

## Today's Readings

**First Reading:** Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

**Second Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

**Gospel:** Matthew 22:15-21

## Suggested Homily for World Mission Sunday

**If you would find it helpful, please use the suggested homily below to encourage your congregation on World Mission Sunday.**

Today's reading from 1 Thessalonians shows us the hope that fills people's hearts when they accept the Gospel message of Jesus. The church in Thessalonica was under persecution – much like many places in our world today, where it is difficult and sometimes dangerous to be a Christian. Despite the persecutions, St Paul tells us that the early Christians had great joy. This is the joy that comes from faith, the joy that our Holy Father, Pope

**Missio** 23 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1NU

**Telephone:** 020 7821 9755

**Email:** [worldmissionsunday@missio.org.uk](mailto:worldmissionsunday@missio.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.missio.org.uk](http://www.missio.org.uk)



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Francis, writes about in *Evangelii Gaudium* when he says: 'The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.'

Set up by St Paul circa AD 50, the church in Thessalonica was one of the earliest church communities to be instituted. It suffered but also grew through persecution. The challenges faced by the early Christians are as relevant today as they were 2,000 years ago. As we speak many brand new churches are being built by missionaries all over the world, especially in Africa and Asia, where the Catholic faithful are growing in number as they respond to the Word. That is why today, on World Mission Sunday, Pope Francis asks us - Catholics of England and Wales - to pray for and give what we can to Missio, so that the young, poor churches in Africa and Asia who need our support can thrive. But Pope Francis also assures us that if we look outside of our own concerns, and beyond ourselves, great joy will be our reward:

'The joy of the Gospel is born of the encounter with Christ and from sharing with the poor. For this reason I encourage parish communities, associations and groups to live an intense fraternal life, grounded in love for Jesus and concern for the needs of the most disadvantaged.' – Pope Francis' World Mission Sunday message 2014.

In today's Gospel Jesus amazes the crowd by speaking with great authority. The denarius that Jesus is given would have had a picture of the Emperor Tiberius on one side and this inscription on the other: 'Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus'. By Jesus saying 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's' he makes a clear distinction between God and Caesar. Jesus is denouncing the idolatrous phrasing on the coin.

Jesus rebukes the abuse of power that can result from wealth and riches and reveals the love of such things for what they are – idolatry. He reminds us that money is an earthly transactional currency whereas God's currency is eternal. God is over and above everything and his portrait is stamped all over creation. He shows human greed for what it is.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus doesn't have any Roman currency on his person. He asks to see the coin, which is handed over by one of the

Pharisees. Jesus is empty-handed as he preaches his message to the Jews. He commands his disciples to go out into the world and rely on the generosity and hospitality of others, just as missionaries today leave everything to go to be with people living in poverty. Today on World Mission Sunday let us remember missionaries in our prayers and let us give generously to Missio, the Pope's chosen instrument for evangelisation in our world, so that our brothers and sisters overseas can be sustained in their faith and so that we all might know the true joy of the Gospel.

## Prayers of the faithful

### Celebrant

On World Mission Sunday we celebrate our unity in faith as brothers and sisters of a worldwide Church. With confidence, we place our requests before the Lord, knowing that he hears the prayers of those who love him.

### Intercessions

1. We pray for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, that he will lead the Church with joy and faith.
2. We pray for missionaries serving in places hostile to the Gospel, that they may be sustained in their faith and joyful in their witness.
3. We pray for the young churches in Africa and Asia, that they will be filled with the joy of knowing the risen Christ.
4. We pray for the many millions of people who have never heard of our Lord, that through our generosity they may have that opportunity today on World Mission Sunday and from here onwards.
5. We pray for families, that they may nurture in each other a strong and vibrant faith in God's love and goodness.

### Celebrant

Loving God, we come before you, united in faith and in love, knowing that you hear us because we make our prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen