

Homily: 29th Sunday: Cycle B: 2024: Is 53: 10-11; Ps 33; Heb 4: 14-16; Mk 10: 35-45
“The Spiritual Foundation for both Evangelization and Promoting Vocations to the Priesthood, Religious Life, and Missions on World Mission Sunday”

As we deal with the crisis of Faith in our time, this week-end as a Church we celebrate *World Mission Sunday*. It is a reminder to us of the need to support the **Missions**, both by our prayers and our generous financial support. Also, I would encourage everyone here to step up their efforts to promote **Priestly, Religious, and Mission Vocations**. Finally, we are all called to be **home missionaries** or sharers of the Good News of our Catholic faith with those we encounter in daily life. In this homily, I want to give three ways to promote all of the above. The first two ways are the spiritual foundation for the third way.

1. **Prayer:** *spending time with the Lord in quiet, in dialog, in sharing our life with Him in honesty and trust, in company with Our Lady. We are called to study and mediate on the Sacred Scriptures daily as I pointed out in last week-end’s homily. We also are called to spend significant time, ideally daily, before our Lord in the most Blessed Sacrament. Coming to Sunday and ideally daily Mass, our Wed & Friday Eucharistic Holy Hours, frequent reception of the Sacrament of Confession, and doing good spiritual reading are all essential - if we want to draw close to the Lord, and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us more into the image of Jesus. Also monitoring our prayer to make sure that most of our prayer is for the Church and for others rather than for our own needs. If we pray for others in generous charity, we can be sure that God will take care of our needs! This is where our prayer *for the Missions, for an increase in Vocations to the (AJ) Priesthood and Religious Life, and that the Lord will help all of us to spread the Catholic Faith* in all that we **say, think and do** becomes very fruitful over time.*
2. **Suffering in love:** All 3 readings remind us, that young & old alike, we are called to live a life of sacrifice, in occasional big ways and frequent small ways, in imitation of Jesus. Yes, suffering, in love and surrender, is necessary to come to salvation. This is not something modern people generally want to hear since we are taught to avoid suffering at all costs. Some of us even grew up in the “era of feel-good Christianity” i.e., the 60’s and 70’s, in which the Faith was presented

as all “happy, happy”; “be positive, man”; “I come to Church to be uplifted – not reminded that I am a sinner”; “don’t talk about gloom and doom”, i.e., sin and the possible consequence of it - **Hell**. Or as one misguided priest said when asked what the essence of Christianity is, answered: “to make one feel good about oneself.” Wow that’s really off! The essence of Christianity is to lead us to a living relationship with the Blessed Trinity and to be transformed in holiness in this life - through love of God and neighbor, and dying to self and sin, so that we can enter someday into God’s Heavenly Kingdom. **This world is often a valley of tears.** “Feel Good Christianity” in light of hard reality can’t help us in the long run. The reality of the true Christian life is there is “no Crown without the Cross”; “no progress without pain”; “no Easter Sunday without Good Friday.” We must suffer in love, in union with Christ, if we want to save our own soul and help Jesus to save other souls. **Also, prayer and suffering in love as well as living a life of sacrifice are the keys to the conversion of hardened sinners.** There is no other way: Jesus, the Blessed Mother, and the Saints show us this repeatedly.

3. **Outward action:** once we have a foundation of prayer and suffering in love then our outward apostolic action will make a difference (see and read the classic spiritual work for deep insights on this reality: *The Soul of the Apostolate*). No longer will we be a **cultural Catholic** (*say we are Catholic, but there is no real evidence of that in our daily life*); or a **habitual Catholic** (*go to Mass out of habit, but don’t really think about what it means to be a Catholic in every aspect of daily life*); but instead we will be a committed Catholic (*the Faith becomes the center of our life, the treasure of our heart, it’s what gives ultimate meaning and purpose to our life*), and **so we want to share our Catholic faith with others in all that we say, think and do.** Instead of *sports*, instead of *pleasure and comfort*, instead of *competing with others and achieving things in our work*, instead of *riches and material things*, the Faith becomes **the one passion** of our life, and then we will be able to truly witness to the Truth of God, which alone sets us free (see John 8). And when enough of us do it, we will see more holy vocations, as our young ppl will realize they were made for greatness, not for passing vanity. God bless you. †