

Making Mercy Practical

Becoming Missionary Disciples

Shortly after Pope Francis made his visit to Mexico, 14 bishops representing Canada, Latin America and the United States met to learn from each other, support one another, and encourage one another. Despite our different cultures, these bishops have a common goal: to invite everyone to encounter Jesus. It is the love of Jesus that unites and unifies.

Jesus calls us his friends. Not servants – servants do not know what his master is doing (Jn 15:15). He calls us into deep friendship. (Jn 15:12-14) Friends speak with each other, know each other’s families, work side by side, and share the same life – as brothers.

To be a missionary disciple is to live and act in a way that announces the Kingdom with *creativity* and **boldness** in every place where the Gospel has not been sufficiently announced or welcomed.

“We bless God in gratitude because he has called us to be instruments of his Kingdom of love and life, and of justice and peace. We are not slaves, but He calls us friends. He himself has entrusted to us the work of his hands to care for the service of all. We thank God also for having made us his collaborators so that we may be in solidarity with his creation, his first book, enabling him to be known, and us to inhabit it as our home.” (Aparecida Concluding Document, para 24, May 2007)

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| † Feed the Hungry | † Admonish the Sinner |
| † Give Drink to the Thirsty | † Instruct the Ignorant |
| † Clothe the Naked | † Counsel the Doubtful |
| † Shelter the Homeless | † Comfort the Sorrowful |
| † Visit the Sick | † Bear Wrongs Patiently |
| † Visit the Imprisoned | † Forgive Injuries |
| † Bury the Dead | † Pray for the Living and
the Dead |



Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven. ~ Pope Francis

St. Vincent Pallotti

St. Vincent Pallotti believed that all are called to be apostles – sent not only to preach, but to care for the suffering in the world since all human beings are in the image and likeness of God. He understood our actions can be minimal when we do them alone. Instead, he promoted greater collaboration and co-responsibility among all. In a rather polarized world, both of these words can seem quaint and unattainable. But, without collaboration, solidarity cannot happen effectively and without co-responsibility, subsidiarity is not possible. Each person, then, is called to work together with God and with others and recognize who and how best to assist those in need. As Pallotti said,

“Remember that the Christian life is one of action; not of speech and daydreams. Let there be few words and many deeds, and let them be done well.”



Madonna Plan

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) established their partnership in 1946 to support their commitment to the mission of serving women and children around the world.

The LDCCW Madonna Plan was established in 1958 to empower women by improving the well-being of mothers and expectant mothers through projects in health, education, and financial security. The LDCCW Madonna Plan funds pro-life maternal and child health projects that teach women about the importance of breast feeding, and good nutrition, as well as projects that empower women through vocational training.

In the countries of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, CRS staff identifies the needs of the poor and targets their solutions. The field staff then sends requests for assistance to CRS headquarters in Baltimore.

The LDCCW Madonna Plan funds are then allocated to meet these requests. The funds are forwarded, monitored, and reported on by CRS field staff.

Working through CRS, we are fulfilling our commitment to the goal cited in the United States Bishops' Economic Pastoral of a world that works fairly for all.

Joy of the Gospel

This portion of Pope Francis' 2013 encyclical would make a perfect reflection for yourself or your meetings!

My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing. All around us we begin to see nurses with soul, teachers with soul, politicians with soul, people who have chosen deep down to be with others and for others. But once we separate our work from our private lives, everything turns grey and we will always be seeking recognition or asserting our needs. We stop being a people.

If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving. Not for their physical appearance, their abilities, their language, their way of thinking, or for any satisfaction that we might receive, but rather because they are God's handiwork, his creation. God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God's glory. Every human being is the object of God's infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives. Jesus offered his precious blood on the cross for that person. Appearances notwithstanding, every person is immensely holy and deserves our love. Consequently, if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. It is a wonderful thing to be God's faithful people. We achieve fulfilment when we break down walls and our heart is filled with faces and names! (Evangelii Gaudium para 273-274)