



Spanish Missionary of Charity Sister Paul supports a patient at the House for the Dying in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in this Oct. 16, 2009, file photo. The Vatican released Pope Francis' message for World Mission Sunday, which will be celebrated Oct. 23 with the theme, "You shall be my witnesses." (CNS/Paul Jeffrey)



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Every Christian, and not just those serving as missionaries in remote regions of the world, have an obligation to share the hope that comes from faith, Pope Francis said.

Christians should become "messengers of hope for all, in every place and circumstance that God has granted us to live," he said in his message for World Mission Sunday, which will be celebrated Oct. 19.

"May all the baptized, as missionary disciples of Christ, make his hope shine forth in every corner of the earth," the pope wrote in the message released Feb. 6 at the Vatican.

"While facing persecutions, tribulations and difficulties, as well as her own imperfections and failures due to the weakness of her members, the church is constantly impelled by the love of Christ to persevere, in union with him, on her missionary journey," he wrote.

The motto for World Mission Day 2025, announced in the pope's message, is "Missionaries of Hope Among All Peoples."

Like Christ who consoled the poor, afflicted and oppressed, the pope said, Jesus' modern-day disciples must hear "the plea of suffering humanity and, indeed, the groaning of every creature that awaits definitive redemption."

The pope thanked missionaries who travel to foreign countries to share the love of God, praising them as "signs of the universal vocation of the baptized to become, by the power of the Spirit and daily effort, missionaries among all peoples and witnesses to the great hope given us by the Lord Jesus."

Inspired and impelled by hope in God, Christian communities can be "harbingers of a new humanity," Francis said, particularly in "developed" areas that exhibit "serious symptoms of human crisis: a widespread sense of bewilderment, loneliness and indifference to the needs of the elderly, and a reluctance to make an effort to assist our neighbors in need."

"In the most technologically advanced nations, 'proximity' is disappearing," the pope said. "Obsession with efficiency and an attachment to material things and ambitions are making us self-centered and incapable of altruism."

The Gospel, however, when "experienced in the life of a community, can restore us to a whole, healthy, redeemed humanity," he said.

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That's why Francis called on Christians to carry out the good works listed in his bull of indiction proclaiming the Holy Year 2025, namely urging peacemaking efforts, supporting families and birthrates, promoting humane treatment of prisoners, caring for the sick and disabled, empowering young people, welcoming migrants, valuing the elderly and prioritizing aid to the poor.

Often, the pope said, it is society's marginalized people "who teach us how to live in hope."

To renew the mission of hope in the church, Francis said Christians must be "renewed in the Easter spirituality" experienced during every Mass, especially during the Easter Triduum, so that by the promise of redemption extended to humanity by Christ, Christians can be "brimming with hope to be shared with all."

"From the paschal mysteries, made present in liturgical celebrations and in the sacraments, we constantly draw upon the power of the Holy Spirit in order to work with zeal, determination and patience in the vast field of global evangelization," he said.

Ultimately, the pope said, the project of renewing the mission of hope begins with prayer and continues with the building and nurturing of Christian communities. He urged Christians to pray with the Psalms in particular, which he said "train us to hope amid adversity, to discern the signs of hope around us, and to have the constant missionary desire that God be praised by all peoples."

"By praying" as well as "by those concrete actions and gestures that prayer itself inspires," he said, "we keep alive the spark of hope lit by God within us, so that it can become a great fire which enlightens and warms everyone around us."