

# MISSION

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**NO EUCHARIST, NO CHURCH**



*Pope Francis greets Bishop John O. Barres of Rockville Centre, N.Y., during a meeting with bishops from the state of New York in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Nov. 15, 2019. The bishops were making their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses to the pope and Vatican officials. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)*

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION:

# EMBRACING THE MISSIONARY CALL

It is moving to be able to write for The Pontifical Mission Societies Mission magazine since my father Oliver Barres wrote for this very magazine under the direction of Archbishop Fulton Sheen in the 1950s and 1960s.

Many of these articles ended up being chapters of my father's book on the Catholic worldwide mission entitled *World Mission Windows*, published by Alba House in 1963 just two years before the Second Vatican Council's document on the missions, *Ad gentes*.

The great Catholic missiologists in history like Bishop Sheen teach us that a deep passion and conviction for Catholic global worldwide mission makes us much more effective missionaries in daily life

in our local Catholic parishes, dioceses, universities, hospitals, institutions, and especially in the secular public square.

Bishop Sheen baptized me on October 6, 1960, at St. Augustine's parish in Larchmont, New York. I can only imagine his riveting voice saying **"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."** as he poured water over my head in the presence of my parents, godparents, four older sisters, and family friends.

Providentially, Bishop Sheen was not only baptizing me but, in a certain sense, sending me out as a future Successor of the Apostles and Diocesan Bishop on a global Catholic mission.

My parents Oliver and Marjorie had

both been ordained Congregational Protestant ministers from the Yale Divinity School but had converted and entered the Catholic Church in 1955. My father's book *One Shepherd, One Flock* describes how they gradually came to embrace the truth claims of the Catholic Church, truth claims that are the fulcrum of the Church's call to global, worldwide mission.

My parents were friends with great Catholic missiologists like Fr. John Considine, MM, often considered the missiological brains and architect of Maryknoll's approach to the missions. They were also friends with Bishop William McNaughton, MM, who, in his late 30s, was a Council Father as the Bishop of the Diocese of Inchon, Korea.

The holy lives, ecclesial missions, and inspirational teachings of these great Catholic figures have inspired my life and mission as a 21st-century American Catholic Bishop, but they also help to express Catholic teaching on missiology and evangelization and inspire our own integration of that teaching in our 21st Century Catholic witness.

All the Catholic missiology and evangelization documents from the Second Vatican Council's *Ad gentes* (1965) and Pope St. Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) to Pope St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris missio* (1990) and Pope Francis' *Evangelium gaudium* (2013) share certain critical themes:

- Catholic missiology is grounded in the doctrine and experience of the Trinity. The saints open their souls contemplatively to the indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity, and it is precisely this indwelling of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their souls that launches them on their unique Trinitarian ecclesial missions to make disciples of all nations. The great missionary saints understand that the Biblical and Eucharistic mission of the Church is animated by the presence

of the Trinity -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- and expressed in the mission mandate of Matthew 28: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

- Jesus Christ is the unique Redeemer of the World: the Alpha and the Omega, the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all peoples, cultures, geographies, and moments of history.
- As "the universal sacrament of salvation," the Catholic Church is by its very nature missionary.
- All Catholics are called to be missionaries and to be constantly open to "**missionary conversion.**" All Catholic dioceses, universities, hospitals, and institutions must seek to deepen their spirit of "missionary conversion."
- Catholic evangelization needs us all to be both witnesses and teachers of the faith in the context of our universal baptismal call to Holiness and Mission.
- All Catholic evangelization is focused on the mysterious power of the Cross of Jesus Christ and all Catholic evangelization requires what Pope St. Paul VI called a "crucifying effort."
- The vibrant living of the Beatitudes in Matthew 25 and the spiritual and corporal works of Mercy are critical to the witness and progress of Catholic evangelization.
- Pope St. John Paul II stresses: "The Church proposes. She imposes nothing. Open the doors to Christ!" A critical component of Catholic evangelization is the Catholic emphasis on Religious Liberty seen in the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Liberty.

- Catholic evangelization and mission require fidelity to every dimension of Catholic teaching. Catholic evangelization and missiology cannot be separated from Catholic Trinitarian Theology, Christology, Pneumatology, Biblical and Fundamental Theology, Dogmatic or Systematic Theology, Sacramental Theology, Moral Theology (including the Gospel of Life and Catholic Social Justice Teaching), Spiritual Theology, Anthropology (the Church's view of the human person), and Eschatology (the Church's teaching of the Last Things).
- This fidelity to every dimension of Catholic teaching and evangelization is in service of the ecumenical and interfaith mission of the Catholic Church. Ecumenical and interfaith progress occurs when the Catholic Church is open to sharing the liberating and objective truths of her teaching in a spirit of charity and mercy.

May each one of us respond to our baptismal call to **"holiness and mission"** and may we be vibrant instruments of "missionary conversion" in the daily life and mission of the Church we love.

*\*Bishop John O. Barres, STD, JCL is the Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre (Long Island, NY). His episcopal motto "Holiness and Mission" is taken from Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical Redemptoris Missio which emphasizes the universal call to holiness and mission in the Catholic Church. It also expresses Bishop Barres' commitment to Pope Francis' emphasis on global Catholic missiology and evangelization and the call for the "missionary conversion" of Catholic parishes and every dimension of Catholic life and witness to the world.*

*"Holiness and  
Mission"*