

Homily 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time of Year A.

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6; Psalm 96:1, 3-5, 7-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5; Matthew 22:15-21

Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

Today is World Mission Sunday. It is a Sunday set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the Church's missionary activities through prayer and sacrifice. We are invited

to, constantly, pray for the success of the Church's missionary activities all over the world. In addition to our

prayers, we are, also, invited to offer material and financial support to the Church's missionary activities.

We are all missionaries, either by going to the missions, or by praying for missionaries or by giving, to support or sustain the missions.

Also today, in a special way, we pray for men and women of goodwill who have sacrificed their resources to support God's work in the missions all over the world.

Pope Francis, in his message for World Missionary Day, 2020, draws our attention to Prophet Isaiah's response to his calling, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

The pope writes, "This is the ever new response to the Lord's question: 'Whom shall I send?'

This invitation from God's merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis. God continues to look for those whom he can send forth into the world and to the nations to bear witness to his love, his deliverance from sin and death, his liberation from evil.

The celebration of World Mission Day is also an occasion for reaffirming how prayer, reflection and the material help of your offerings are so many opportunities to participate actively in the mission of Jesus in his Church."

In the first reading, King Cyrus, though a Persian pagan king, God anointed him and gave him the mission to set the people of Israel free from the Babylonian captivity.

The second reading has Paul, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy. God gave them the mission of preaching the Good News.

We recall that Paul was a persecutor of Christians, but God made him "a chosen instrument". Silvanus and Timothy were converts to Christianity. They became Paul's co-workers and great missionaries.

The fact that God used them as his chosen instruments, not minding their past and former ways of life, is an encouragement that God calls everyone for his mission. He wants to use everyone to continue the mission of Jesus Christ at various levels. Everyone is qualified! However, God gives mission graces to those who accept the call.

The mission of Jesus which the Church and all of us are to continue is to proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, bring recovery of sight to the blind, and set the oppressed free.

In Matthew 10:8, "Heal the sick,

cleanse those who have leprosy, and drive out demons."

In Matthew

25:35-40, give food to the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, and visit prisoners.

The

mission of Jesus is within and around us. There is mission for everyone.

Pope Francis wrote in 2019, "I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a missionary. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God's love."

Let us,

therefore, not stifle, choke or suffocate the spirit of mission in us and in other missionaries.

Let us not suffocate the spirit of mission in anyone else by what we do to them and what we say about them.

Let us pray to have the spirit of mission like Paul, Silvanus and Timothy and other great missionaries through whose sacrifice Christianity reached the ends of the earth, and has survived till our time.

In the Gospel of today, the Pharisees and the Herodians were bent on suffocating the spirit of mission in Jesus by persecuting him. They plotted to entrap him. They accused him of many things. In the same way, Churches, Priests, Bishops, Pope and Christians are persecuted all over the world in different ways.

Jesus forewarned his followers to expect such persecutions since he, himself, was persecuted (John 15:20).

We pray for the persecuted Churches, Priests, Bishops and Christians all over the world, that their faith may not fail.

We pray that

Christian leaders may stand up and stand firm to resist the Evil One and his agents prowling around and devouring Christians and Christianity. Amen.