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Message of Pope Francis

WORLD MISSION DAY 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year, as we celebrate World Mission Day, the Year of Faith, which is an important opportunity to strengthen our friendship with the Lord and our journey as a Church that preaches the Gospel with courage, comes to an end. Here are some reflections taken from Pope Francis' message.

Missionary spirit is not only about geographical territories, but about peoples, cultures and individuals, because the "boundaries" of faith do not only cross places and human traditions, but the heart of each man and each woman.

We are all invited to walk the streets of the world with our brothers and sisters, proclaiming and witnessing to our faith in Christ and making ourselves heralds of his Gospel.

We must always have the courage and the joy of proposing, with respect, an encounter with Christ, and being heralds of his Gospel. Jesus came among us to show us the way of salvation and he entrusted to us the mission to make it known to all to the ends of the earth.

It is important never to forget a fundamental principle for every evangelizer: one cannot announce Christ without the Church. Evangelization is not an isolated individual or private act; it is always ecclesial.

Let us bring to the world, through our witness, with love, the hope given by faith! The Church's missionary spirit is not about proselytizing, but the testimony of a life that illuminates the path, which brings hope and love.

The Church – I repeat once again – is not a relief organization, an enterprise or an NGO, but a community of people, animated by the Holy Spirit, who have lived and are living the wonder of the encounter with Jesus Christ and want to share this experience of deep









joy, the message of salvation that the Lord gave us. It is the Holy Spirit who guides the Church in this path.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" *(Matt 28:19)* is something enriching for each particular Church, each community, because sending missionaries is never a loss, but a gain. I appeal to all those who feel this calling to respond generously to the Holy Spirit, according to your state in life, and not to be afraid to be generous with the Lord.

I wish to reaffirm my closeness in prayer to individuals, families and communities who suffer violence and intolerance, and I repeat to them the consoling words of Jesus: "Take courage, I have overcome the world" *(Jn 16:33)*.

In conclusion:

Benedict XVI expressed the hope that: "The word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere" *(2 Thes 3:1)*. May this *Year of Faith* increasingly strengthen our relationship with Christ the Lord, since only in him is there the certitude for looking to the future and the guarantee of an authentic and lasting love" *(Porta fidei, 15)*.

This is my wish for *World Mission Day* this year. I cordially bless missionaries and all those who accompany and support this fundamental commitment of the Church to proclaim the Gospel to all the ends of the earth.

Thus will we, as ministers and missionaries of the Gospel, experience "the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing" *(Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 80)*.

- From the Vatican, 19 May 2013, Solemnity of Pentecost



YEAR OF FAITH 2012 2013



