



## The heart of mission: the encounter with Jesus Christ

*The Second Vatican Council has given us a deeper theological understanding of the mission of the Church and of every Christian. To have a mission means to have been sent in order to accomplish a specific task. Missionaries are people who have been entrusted with a mandate to fulfil. The mission entrusted to us as Christians is part of a great love story. It starts within **God Himself**, in the loving relationships between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, called by theologians "missions".*

*The love, which is the inner life of God, flows over into his **creation**, which is an expression of the "tenderness of God" and has a trinitarian character. (LS 239) Because we are created in the image of God we carry within us a deep longing for unlimited love. In our God-given freedom, we seek in vain fulfillment of love in ourselves or in material things. When we chose to live without God (god-less), we deprive ourselves and others of the deepest experience of love.*

*Our longing is truly fulfilled when we encounter Jesus Christ, the incarnate love of God, a love that is stronger than death. Those who are touched by the love of Christ and entrust themselves to the guidance of his Spirit are enabled to break out of the prison of an egoistic self-love (sin) experience something of the joy and freedom of the children of God, and then feel the great desire to pass on this great gift to others.*

*Baptism is the sign of our union with Christ the Lord in the community of the disciples of Jesus, the Church. Through our baptism we are sent on mission into the world to proclaim the love of God and give witness through the example of a holy life.*



### Texts

**The Bible** is full of vocation stories. The Old Testament tells of people who have a deep experience of God and are sent as prophets, as God's messengers, to His people:

Moses (Ex 3); Samuel (1 Sam 3); David (1 Sam 16); Isaiah (Is 6); Jeremiah (Jer 1); Ezekiel (Ez 1)

The disciples of Jesus become apostles through their encounter with Jesus: Peter (Mark 1:17); Saul, Apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 22); Nathanael (Jn 1, 35-39); Mary of Magdala, first witness of the resurrection (Jn 20: 11-18).

- **The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature**, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father. This decree, however, flows from the "fount-like love" or charity of God the Father... (Ad Gentes 2)
- I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to **a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ**, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. (Evangelii Gaudium 3)
- Christ is the "eternal Gospel" (Rev 14:6); he "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8), yet his riches and beauty are inexhaustible. He is for ever young and **a constant source of newness**. (EG 11)
- Those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of **communicating life to others**... Here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is what mission means. (EG 10)
- In virtue of their baptism, **all the members** of the People of God have **become missionary disciples** (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization... The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. (EG 120)

### Questions for reflection

- ✚ What spiritual experience moved our founder to his missionary commitment?
- ✚ What attracted me to the person of Jesus? Which of his words inspired me most?