

The Mission of the Baptized

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A friend of mine often uses the phrase “I am on a mission.” When she says those words, I know with certainty that whatever the mission is, it is something urgent. She will be singularly focused and nothing, no matter how seductive, will distract her from accomplishing her task. She is on fire! My friend would probably never think of herself as a poster child, but she

could serve as one for the concept of *mission*.

The word “mission” comes from the Latin word *mittere*, which means to send. In its most general sense, a mission is an assigned duty or task. A mission can be a simple task like being sent to clean the yard, or it can be something quite serious such as being sent to relieve hunger in a poverty-stricken area.

When we use the term mission in reference to the Church and the baptized, we are talking about something serious, because we are talking about being sent to accomplish God’s mission. The Church is missionary by its very nature because it exists to continue the work of the risen Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church continues the response to Jesus’ words: “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” (Matthew 28:19–20).

The Church accomplishes its mission through the ministry of the baptized. Through the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), each of us is empowered for mission. We are sent forth from the baptismal waters to “walk always as a child of the light” and to keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts. In Baptism we put on Christ, in Confirmation we are strengthened with the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and each week as we celebrate the Eucharist we are nourished with the body and blood of Jesus and sent forth to love and serve the Lord in others.

While some of the baptized are sent to mission lands or hear an awe-inspiring call to service, each of us is called to

witness to the person and message of Jesus in the daily tasks of our lives. All of us are sent to act as my friend does: to have a sense of urgency, to be singularly focused and live in the fire of Pentecost. This is the kind of witness that will accomplish the mission and it is everyone’s responsibility.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- In what ways do you see yourself carrying out the mission of your Baptism?
- In what circumstances do you find it easy to share your faith with others?
- What does the phrase “walking as a child of light” mean to you?

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Set aside some time each day in the nine days before Pentecost to pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance and enlightenment about your own mission.
- Write a note of welcome and encouragement to one of the newly baptized members of your parish.
- Volunteer to become part of a parish or local neighborhood activity where you can use your talents to serve others. *R*

SCRIPTURE CORNER

Matthew 10:37–42; John 15:1–17; Acts 3:1–23

Read and reflect on these readings. What are they calling you to in your mission as a baptized Catholic?

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