

# SUNDAY PLUS

Here I am. Send me.

## The challenge of mission

By Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

The small dish of peanuts, charcoal-roasted in my honour, was a unique banquet.

The couple whose home I was visiting had four small children and regularly went to bed hungry at the end of the day. "We feed the children and then Florence and I fill our stomachs with water so that we feel less hungry." They kept their poverty a well-guarded secret unless the need was urgent. They only approached me a few times to say that they had no food left and no money until the end of the month when James would receive his salary.

That's why these roasted peanuts were, in my eyes, an unforgettable banquet. As a Tanzanian

friend, a Missionary of Africa, remarked, "We have almost nothing but we will make sure that you, as a visitor, receive the very best that we have."

Today is World Mission Sunday, when we focus on parts of the world where the Church is young and in need of support.

Missionaries carry the Gospel to places where they'd never imagined travelling to – and are themselves evangelised by the people whom they serve.

Missionary life dares someone to see the world through other people's eyes and, within a new cultural setting, to ask themselves unexpected questions and find unforeseen answers. Its challenges, joys and sorrows rewrite time in a way which is sometimes heart-



breaking but can also break open a heart to new ways of living, loving and prioritising. A genuine missionary receives far more than they give.

Florence's dish of peanuts taught me the total self-giving of Eucharist. Florence and James were the teachers and I the student.

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## World Mission Day

The same Spirit who guides the universal Church also inspires ordinary men and women for extraordinary missions. Thus it was that a young French woman, Pauline Jaricot, founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith exactly two hundred years ago. Her beatification will be celebrated in this jubilee year. Albeit in poor health, she accepted God's inspiration to establish a network of prayer and collection for missionaries, so that the faithful could actively participate in the mission "to the ends of the earth". This brilliant idea gave rise to the annual celebration of World Mission Day, in which the funds collected in local

communities are applied to the universal fund with which the Pope supports missionary activity.

In this regard, I think too of the French Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson, who established the Association of the Holy Childhood\* to promote the mission among children, with the motto "Children evangelise children, children pray for children, children help children the world over". I also think of Jeanne Bigard, who inaugurated the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle for the support of seminarians and priests in mission lands. Those three Mission Societies were recognised as "Pontifical" exactly a hundred years ago.

Pope Francis, *Message for World Mission Day 2022*

\*Known in England as Mission Together and in Scotland as Missionary Children

### Feast of the week Friday 28 October

## Ss Simon and Jude, Apostles

Jesus had two disciples called James and two called Judas. The two named James both did great work and died as martyrs.

It wasn't quite the same for the two called Judas. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, whereas Judas Thaddeus dedicated his life to the Gospel and was eventually martyred.

It seems that people confused Judas Thaddeus with Judas Iscariot and forgot about the faithful

Judas Thaddeus – which is why he is sometimes described as "the forgotten saint". Early Christians apparently tried to solve the problem by using the name "Jude" – but we really don't know, just as we don't know the real reason why he became regarded as the patron saint of lost causes. In his very short epistle, Jude described himself as "servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James".

We often want someone around "when the chips are down" and we are short of options. St Jude, patron saint of lost causes, pray for us.

*Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM*

Help us, Lord, to be on mission: to be willing to think as you do and to believe with you that those around us are also my brothers and sisters. May your compassionate love touch our hearts and make us all true missionary disciples. Amen.

Today: Ecclesiasticus 35:12-14. 16-19  
2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18  
Luke 18:9-14

Monday: Ephesians 4:32 – 5:8  
Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday: Ephesians 5:21-33  
Luke 13:18-21  
(W): Six Welsh Martyrs

& Companions (Feast): Hebrews 11:33-40;  
John 12:24-26 or 15:18-21 or 17:11-19

Wednesday: Ephesians 6:1-9  
Luke 13:22-30

Thursday: Ephesians 6:10-20  
Luke 13:31-35

Friday: Ephesians 2:19-22  
Luke 6:12-19

Saturday: Philippians 1:18-26  
Luke 14:1. 7-11

Next Sunday: Wisdom 11:22 – 12:2  
2 Thessalonians 1:11 – 2:2  
Luke 19:1-10