

Dear Father,

17th September 2020

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Michael O'Sullivan, the National Director of World Missions Ireland, which is the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission. As a White Father or Missionary of Africa, and before being appointed National Director in January, I had served for over twenty-five years in the Arab World. Unfortunately due to the present circumstances, I have not had the opportunity to meet you at diocesan gatherings or deanery meetings. However, I do hope we will get the opportunity to do so soon.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY
18th October 2020

In June this year I wrote to your Archbishop on behalf of the Holy Father, appealing for your diocese's help towards his 'COVID-19 Emergency Fund'. At the time I was very conscious of the financial challenges that parishes in Ireland were facing, and I still am. However, I must appeal to you personally today, Father, for your continued support towards one of the Church's most exceptional moments of universal solidarity – **World Mission Sunday**.

This year World Mission Sunday will take place over the weekend of 18th October. Similar to the Good Friday Collection for the Holy Land and Peter's Pence, World Mission Sunday is one of the three yearly Universal Church collections. Since its announcement as a papal collection in 1926, all parishes worldwide have offered their Mass collections to help further the work of missionaries and mission overseas. In basic terms, World Mission Sunday is the Holy Father's direct appeal for spiritual and financial support so that the life-giving work of missionaries can continue. In fact, many are surprised to discover that World Mission Sunday takes place in every single parish where the Church is present. This includes not only in Ireland and across Europe, but also in poorer parishes in the developing world. This is what makes World Mission Sunday such a special celebration of solidarity with churches supporting each other.

This year, World Mission Sunday is in real jeopardy as the pandemic means that less parishioners are attending Mass, with less offerings in the basket. The implications for overseas communities in the months ahead will be devastating. In many of our poorer parishes overseas, missionaries are working on the front line. These women and men already do so much, walking hand-in-hand with marginalised communities, long before and long after any emergency. The pandemic adds even more challenges for missionaries, many of whom are in war-torn countries; remote areas where political conflicts, violent protests, extreme poverty, malnutrition, and diseases are rife. These are crises faced on a daily basis and, looking beyond COVID-19, sadly these crises will remain. It is for this reason that I am appealing to you directly. Your on-going support of World Mission Sunday plays an enormous part in easing their suffering – and I know it will continue to do so. In an attempt to help lessen the impact of COVID-19 on World Mission Sunday Mass collections in the coming weeks, parishes and communities will receive a supply of donation envelopes. May I ask you to distribute these in advance of October 18th? The envelopes will feature Sister Marie Catherine. From Niger, Sister Marie Catherine is one of tens of thousands of missionaries overseas who dedicate their lives to the marginalised. It is missionaries like her that your parish is supporting.

Finally, may I ask for you to appeal to parishioners for their extra spiritual and financial support on this World Mission Sunday? I know how challenging these times are. Although we may suffer here in Ireland, let us spare a thought and a prayer for our brothers and sisters overseas who are struggling to survive in the face of much adversity. I thank you for your continued help at this time. Be assured of my prayers for your ministry and for those in your care.

Sincerely,



Michael P O'Sullivan, M.Afr
National Director