

SUNDAY PLUS

Go on your way

October is the Extraordinary Month of Mission requested by Pope Francis



Go out of your way

by Stephen Davies

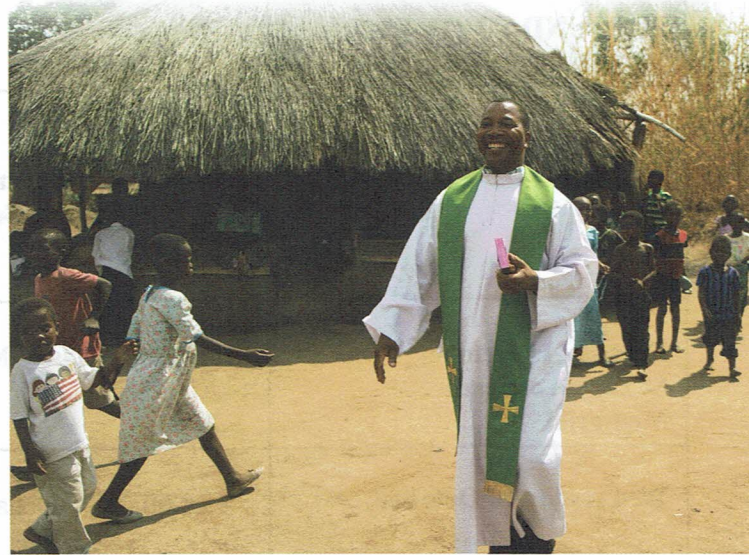
I have a vivid memory of standing in a field, surrounded by over two million other people. It was World Youth Day 2000 and we had gathered at the invitation of St John Paul II.

As I received Communion, amidst the noise and chaos, I felt a special connection to the others on pilgrimage with me, but also with people throughout the world. I was struck by the fact that at that moment in churches and cathedrals, in huts and under trees, people were receiving Our Lord in a special way at Mass. I was not alone. All of us, the family of God, had come together to say, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should

enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

Communion brings that healing – usually not in ways we expect – and today's Gospel reminds us to say "thank you."

During this Extraordinary Month of Mission, I'm struck that this is a gift we need to share. I'd travelled on a coach for over thirty hours to reach the WYD Mass. The struggle and discomfort was nothing compared to the hundreds of miles which priests, like Fr Henry in Malawi, travel. He rides his motorbike along dirt tracks to reach the remote corners of his parish to bring Jesus to those who need him, and so they know that they, too, are not alone and can receive healing. And we have a responsibility, a mission, to help this happen through our prayers and support this and every month.



Stephen Davies is the Red Box Director for Missio, the Pope's own charity for overseas mission.

Fr Henry. Photo Missio-England and Wales, www.missio.org.uk

Not lost but found


by Fr Paul Douthwaite

I have often thought that when an offender is "locked up" it is not only society's way of dealing with crime but also a way of putting at a distance the embarrassment of human imperfection. It is not something new. The lepers of Jesus' time and place were an embarrassing human imperfection, an imperfection that was aligned to sin. For that reason, they were not allowed to enter villages and had to remain at a distance.

Not unlike today's Gospel passage in which the Samaritan leper returned to show Jesus his appreciation for his cure. In the setting of the prison chapel, a small number of offenders are awakened to their wrongdoing,

seek forgiveness and express their gratitude to a God who forgives. Behind bars we find not only the lost souls of society but also those who, in availing themselves of the opportunity for forgiveness, have been found and can be restored.

Fr Paul Douthwaite is the National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons, HMPPS/NOMS Catholic Faith Adviser for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Lord, I don't always have the time, energy or inclination to walk that extra mile towards holiness. Give me the courage and the strength that I need  Amen.

What if you're lost?

by Gerlinde Symons

People in prison know what it feels like to live on the margins of society. Just like the lepers in our Gospel reading today, they too have experienced rejection, scorn and harsh judgement. But it is precisely from this place of weakness and helplessness that God's grace can work, once each person recognises their need for God. When all has been taken away from you, you begin to appreciate that everything is a gift from God.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus reached out to those on the margins – he wanted to change them by loving and healing them. And he wants to do the same for each one of us today. Perhaps we can begin by asking ourselves: what am I attached to that is getting in the way of having

a deeper relationship with God? What areas in my life need God's healing touch? Once we open our hearts to him in humility and faith, God can bring healing to our lives and, just like the grateful leper, we too will want to give him thanks and praise!

Gerlinde Symons is a Catholic lay chaplain at two UK prisons.

"Holiness is walking in God's presence and in an irreproachable manner. You cannot buy or sell holiness, neither can you give it away. In fact, it is a journey that I must make into God's presence: no one else can do it in my name. Of course, I can pray that someone else may become holy, but the path is one that he must walk, not I."

Pope Francis

Today:
2 Kings 5:14-17
2 Timothy 2:8-13
Luke 17:11-19

Monday:
Romans 1:1-7
Luke 11:29-32

Tuesday:
Romans 1:16-25
Luke 11:37-41

Wednesday:
Romans 2:1-11
Luke 11:42-46

Thursday:
Romans 3:21-30
Luke 11:47-54

Friday:
St Luke, Evangelist
2 Timothy 4:10-17
Luke 10:1-9

Saturday:
Romans 4:13, 16-18
Luke 12:8-12

Next Sunday:
Exodus 17:8-13
2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:2
Luke 18:1-8

redemptorist
PUBLICATIONS

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