

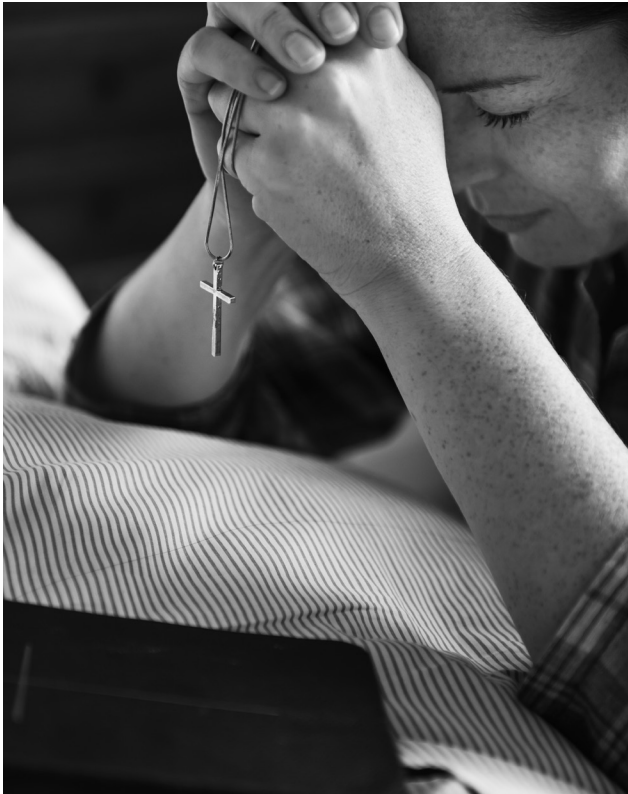
ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN SPIRITUALITY CORNER REFLECTION

Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, SSps

“The Joy of the Missionary Calling”

As we awake each morning and go through our day with the desire that “the Holy Triune God live in our hearts and in the hearts of all people”, we can rejoice in the calling we each have received to the Arnoldus family, joined with brothers and sisters around the globe in a committed response to mission. I reflected on this year when we accompanied the four SVD’s who made their perpetual profession in Holy Spirit chapel in Techny. Since 1875, how many men and women have vowed in that chapel and in SVD and SSps chapels around the world to spread the Word of God in deed and in word wherever they find themselves!

Pope Francis on mission and particularly in relationship to the Mission Celebrations this October said, “I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV (30 November 1919). Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church’s missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God’s own eyes and heart.” “To proclaim the Gospel is first and foremost the communication of an experience of Christ himself.” “To communicate the Gospel is to offer people the opportunity to experience an event in the form of a personal encounter with the living God.”



In St. Arnold’s time, the central focus of ‘mission ad gentes’, was on continents outside of Europe. Today it is all around us. In an address to the Canadian Bishops’ in September 2019, Conference Archbishop Giampietro Dal Toso, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), noted “Reality itself is imposing the need for the *missio ad gentes*. This is clear if we consider the statistics: in England, 53% of the population affirms not having any religious affiliation; in Germany, a survey predicts that in the year 2060, Christians will be reduced to half the current number, mainly because young people between the ages of 25 and 40 no longer baptize their children. Therefore, even in the West, [including the U.S. and Canada] the reality of the facts compels us to the *missio ad gentes*, that is, to the proclamation of the faith to those who do not believe. Missionary awareness is not something separated from pastoral care, but it is in some way its culmination. The Missionary Month is an extraordinary opportunity for this: to help the ordinary pastoral activity of the Church find new strength in this missionary dimension that makes it go beyond itself.”

Pope Francis describes mission as: “A treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed” to walk together with the people of our time, to listen to what they carry in their hearts, to offer them, with our lives, the most credible response, that is, the one that comes from God, through Jesus Christ. First with witness; then they will ask you, ‘But why are you like this?’, and then it will be the moment to speak.”

During this month of October, may our commitment to the call we have received deepen our own joy and draw all we meet to a deeper experience of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Two references that give daily updates on mission and ministry around the world, calling us to prayer that the “Holy Triune God live in all hearts” are: www.fides.org and www.CatholicCulture.org