



October 15, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach World Mission Sunday (WMS) on **October 18, 2026**, I write to you with deep gratitude for your dedication to the mission of the Church to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This year the WMS celebration is unlike any other in our lifetime, for two reasons: First, this World Mission Sunday marks the **100th anniversary** of its establishment by Pope Pius XI in 1926. This centenary is an opportunity to mark it with renewed missionary zeal. This year's theme, ***"One in Christ, United in Mission"*** chosen by Pope Leo XIV, invites us to rediscover the profound unity we share in Christ through baptism and how our baptismal missionary identity overflows into the mission of the Church to bring all creatures into communion with God and us. Secondly, the **beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen on September 24**, which reminds us of how every priest must have a mind and a heart for the missions.

Pope Leo XIV recognizes how important World Mission Sunday is for the Church. He spent a large part of his priestly ministry as a missionary in Peru, serving communities in the Andean highlands and rural villages, and has noted how dependent he was on the support of the Church universal through WMS.

Last World Mission Sunday Pope Leo asked our support by saying, *"Please help me help missionaries everywhere."* That's what WMS does: to help Pope Leo care for the 1,130 missionary dioceses and territories under his supervision through the Dicastery for Evangelization.

We must never forget that 5.5 of the 8.1 billion people alive are not Christian, two millennia after Pentecost. The second collection we take up on World Mission Sunday supports the Church's missionary work in places where the Gospel has never been heard before and where the Church is too young, persecuted, or poor to sustain itself.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will renew in us the fire of the early Church, that we might truly be One in Christ, United in Mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL.
Bishop of Erie

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