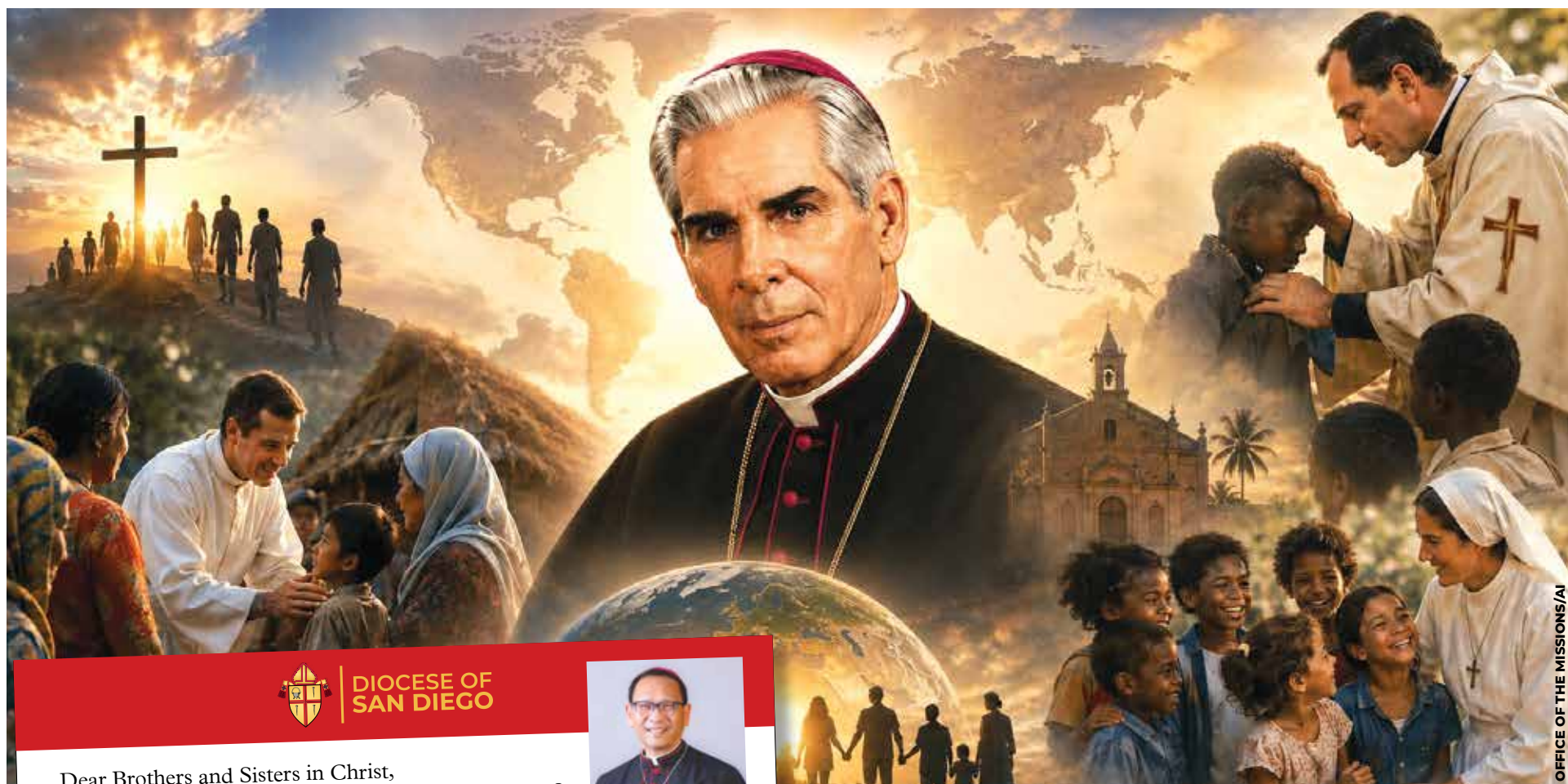




OFFICE OF THE MISSIONS/AI



**DIOCESE OF
SAN DIEGO**



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
World Mission Sunday 2026, celebrated on Oct. 17-18, marks the 100th anniversary of its establishment by Pope Pius XI in 1926. This centenary offers a special opportunity to renew our missionary zeal and unite in prayer and solidarity to support the Church's mission throughout the world.

This year is especially significant for Catholics in the United States because of the Sept. 24 beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen. Though widely known for his television ministry, writings and eloquence, he often said, "My greatest love has always been for the missions of the Church." As national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States for 16 years, he championed World Mission Sunday and directed its proceeds to mission territories. We can confidently rely on his intercession for World Mission Sunday 2026.

The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV, "One in Christ, United in Mission," invites us to rediscover our unity in Christ through baptism and to live our shared call to bring others into communion with God and one another. In his message, Pope Leo teaches that "the mystery of union with Christ lies at the heart of mission." He explains that "being a Christian is not primarily about practices or ideas; it is a life in union with Christ, in which we share in his filial relationship with the Father in the Holy Spirit ... This union gives rise to mutual communion among believers and is the source of all missionary fruitfulness."

The Holy Father further reminds us that, "Unity in mission means safeguarding and nurturing the spirituality of communion and missionary cooperation. By daily fostering this attitude, divine grace gradually teaches us to see our brothers and sisters through the eyes of faith."

All of us are called to participate in this mission. Through World Mission Sunday, Catholics worldwide support the Church where it is young, poor, persecuted or barely present. As Pope Leo appeals, "Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion. I renew my heartfelt gratitude 'for everything you will do to help me help missionaries throughout the world.'"

On World Mission Sunday, we stand in solidarity with missionaries, priests, religious sisters and brothers, and lay leaders serving in the 1,130 mission dioceses across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania and the Middle East. Our prayers and financial support help them proclaim Christ and build his Church.

Each time we support the missions, we affirm that we are one Church, one family in Christ, united in bringing hope and love to all people. Thank you for your continued generosity, which makes a real difference in the lives of those who might otherwise never hear the Gospel.

Let this World Mission Sunday be a blessing for our diocese and foster greater missionary zeal in all of us. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit renew in us the fire of the early Church, so that we may truly be "One in Christ, United in Mission," growing in missionary awareness, solidarity and responsibility.

With every blessing in gratitude for your generosity to the missions,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Michael Pham
Bishop of San Diego

Evangelization Is 'Always a Work of Love'

The following are excerpts from Pope Leo XIV's message for the 100th annual World Mission Sunday, which will be observed Oct. 18.

For World Mission Day 2026, I have chosen the theme "One in Christ, United in Mission."

Being a Christian is not primarily about practices or ideas; it is a life in union with Christ. This union gives rise to mutual communion among believers and is the source of all missionary fruitfulness.

The more united we are in Christ, the better able we will be to carry out together the mission that he entrusts to us.

No baptized person is exempt from or indifferent to mission: Everyone, each according to their own vocation and condition of life, participates in the great work that Christ has entrusted to his Church.

If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. The Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the world is not an abstract ideal; it is the Gospel of God's faithful love, which became flesh in the face and life of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the disciples and the Church as a whole is to continue the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit: a mission born of love, lived in love, and leading to love. Throughout the centuries, multitudes of Christians — martyrs, confessors and missionaries — have given their lives to make this divine love known to the world. Thus, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, the Church's evangelizing mission will continue until the end of time.

I would like to express my special gratitude to today's "ad gentes" mis-

sionaries.

They have left their homeland, their families and all sense of security in order to proclaim the Gospel and bring Christ and his love to places that are often challenging, poor, conflict-ridden or culturally distant. Despite adversity and human limitations, they continue to give themselves joyfully, because they know that Christ himself, and his Gospel, are the greatest treasures we can offer.

Filled with admiration for men and women missionaries, I make a special appeal to the whole Church to join them in the mission of evangelization through the witness of our lives in Christ, through prayer and through our contributions to the missions.

Let us all commit to contributing to the great mission of evangelization — which is always a work of love — according to our own vocation and the gifts we have received. Your prayers and practical support, particularly on World Mission Day, will be a great help in bringing the Gospel of God's love to everyone, especially the poorest and those most in need. Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion.

Read Pope Leo's full message at vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/mission/documents/20260125-giornata-missionaria.html

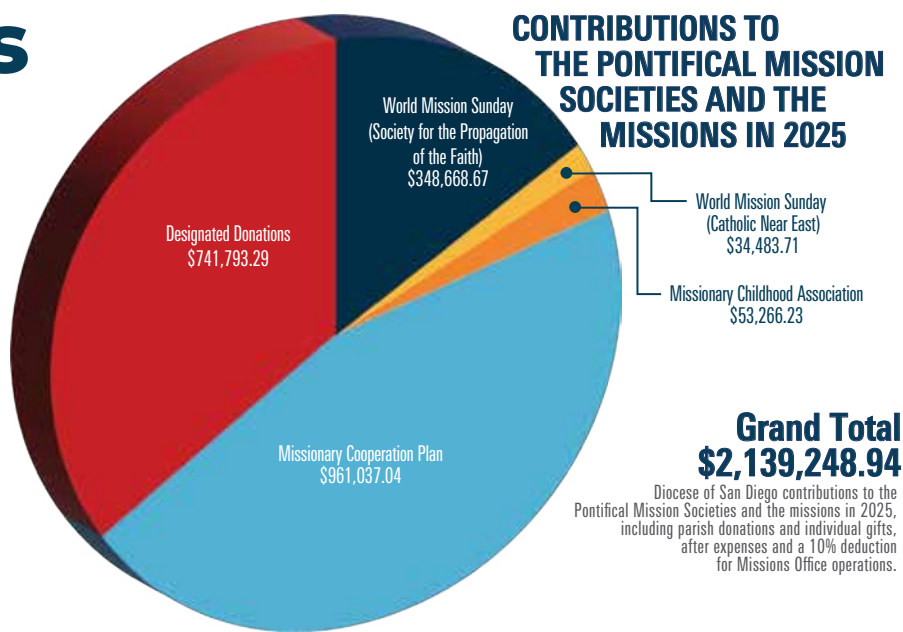


CNS PHOTO/LOLA GOMEZ

helptheimissions.org

Support the Missions

Donate online at helptheimissions.org, by phone at (858) 490-8250, or by mail to: San Diego Diocese, Office for the Missions, P.O. Box 82386, San Diego, CA 92138-2386.



PARISH	MISSION SUNDAY	MCA*	MCP**	TOTAL
St. Gabriel, Poway	\$6,630.00		\$10,080.23	\$16,710.23
St. Gregory the Great, San Diego	\$4,148.00	\$1,171.95	\$16,220.70	\$21,540.65
St. James, Solana Beach	\$5,793.00		\$8,261.75	\$14,054.75
St. John of the Cross, Lemon Grove	\$3,182.00	\$479.78	\$7,158.00	\$10,819.78
St. John the Evangelist, Encinitas	\$5,663.00		\$18,285.00	\$23,948.00
St. John the Evangelist, San Diego	\$2,725.00		\$2,741.00	\$5,466.00
St. Joseph Cathedral, San Diego	\$1,945.00		\$5,606.00	\$7,551.00
St. Joseph, Holtville	\$810.00		\$564.00	\$1,374.00
St. Joseph, Westmorland	\$158.00		\$169.00	\$327.00
St. Jude Shrine of the West, San Diego	\$4,402.39		\$8,240.85	\$12,643.24
St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Lakeside	\$546.00		\$1,059.00	\$1,605.00
St. Kieran, El Cajon	\$1,112.00	\$809.53	\$8,655.85	\$10,577.38
St. Louise de Marillac, El Cajon	\$1,630.00		\$850.00	\$2,480.00
St. Luke, El Cajon	\$4,773.00		\$9,652.50	\$14,425.50
St. Margaret Mary, Brawley	\$1,183.20		\$2,593.53	\$3,776.73
St. Margaret, Oceanside	\$5,028.00		\$7,277.00	\$12,305.00
St. Mark, San Marcos	\$12,296.50		\$19,820.00	\$32,116.50
St. Martin of Tours, La Mesa	\$5,115.00	\$1,449.24	\$8,420.00	\$14,984.24
St. Mary Magdalene, San Diego	\$4,395.00	\$1,558.45	\$10,775.00	\$16,728.45
St. Mary, Escondido	\$1,000.00	\$176.00	\$21,398.25	\$22,574.25
St. Mary, National City	\$2,194.00		\$3,486.00	\$5,680.00
St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Oceanside	\$1,625.00		\$8,234.50	\$9,859.50
St. Maximilian Kolbe Mission, San Diego	\$241.00		\$0.00	\$241.00
St. Michael, Poway	\$5,603.00	\$12,590.78	\$11,287.00	\$29,480.78
St. Michael, San Diego	\$5,495.01		\$9,807.02	\$15,302.03
St. Patrick, Calipatria	\$257.00		\$1,791.00	\$2,048.00
St. Patrick, Carlsbad	\$4,990.00	\$1,835.00	\$17,824.75	\$24,649.75
St. Patrick, San Diego	\$432.00		\$5,247.73	\$5,679.73
St. Peter the Apostle, Fallbrook	\$4,367.39	\$1,330.56	\$6,134.00	\$11,831.95
St. Pius X, Chula Vista	\$1,650.00	\$784.35	\$14,837.00	\$17,271.35
St. Pius X, Jamul	\$150.00	\$226.16	\$3,617.00	\$3,993.16
St. Richard, Borrego Springs	\$709.33		\$1,294.00	\$2,003.33
St. Rita, San Diego	\$2,453.00	\$350.00	\$5,893.00	\$8,696.00
St. Rose of Lima, Chula Vista	\$2,590.00	\$645.00	\$5,282.77	\$8,517.77
St. Stephen, Valley Center	\$2,171.00		\$2,365.00	\$4,536.00
St. Therese of Carmel, Del Mar	\$8,376.00		\$12,517.00	\$20,893.00
St. Therese, San Diego	\$1,400.00	\$4,131.55	\$6,222.00	\$11,753.55
St. Thomas Indian Mission, Fort Yuma	\$645.00		\$272.00	\$917.00
St. Thomas More, Oceanside	\$2,628.00		\$10,795.68	\$13,423.68
St. Timothy, Escondido	\$1,900.00	\$315.22	\$8,651.00	\$10,866.22
St. Vincent de Paul, San Diego	\$193.00		\$6,714.00	\$6,907.00
The Immaculata, San Diego	\$5,677.00		\$12,190.00	\$17,867.00
Unspecified	\$360.00	\$3,480.00	\$0.00	\$3,840.00
Nazareth School	\$0.00	\$1,973.36	\$0.00	\$1,973.36
Notre Dame Academy	\$0.00	\$516.00	\$0.00	\$516.00
TOTAL	\$383,152.38	\$53,266.23	\$961,037.04	\$1,397,455.65

Children Go from 'Almost Catatonic' to 'Thriving'

By Denis Grasska



It's not often that an announcement at Sunday Mass changes your life.

But it happened 11 years ago to Jim Napier, of St. Margaret Parish in Oceanside, when (now Deacon) Charles Navarrete stepped up to the ambo to make a presentation about his 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Emiliani Project.

At the time, Napier felt that he had "been blessed my whole life" and that he "needed to find a way to give back." The deacon's presentation provided him with a vehicle to do that.

As he listened, Napier thought, "That's perfect. That's exactly what I want to do. I don't want to just give money. I want to be physically, hands-on involved in doing this."

The Emiliani Project was founded in 2012 by Deacon Navarrete and two other military veterans — Jordan Reese and Jason Schwartz. Construction began in 2015 and continues today in the small mountain village of Caldas, south of Medellin, Colombia.

In July 2023, the first 14 children arrived at the 11.5-acre property, which is known as Hogar de Cristo (The Home of Christ), a home for orphaned, abandoned and abused children. Today, the site includes two



ASSEMBLY REQUIRED: Volunteers, including Emiliani Project Board Member Matthew Monroe (second from left), help to assemble a wall component for the second dormitory at Hogar de Cristo during a mission trip in July of 2016.

dormitories that house 27 children, ages 3 to 17, with capacity for twice that; shower and dining facilities; five classrooms; a technology lab; and playgrounds, where — as Napier says — "the children can, once again, enjoy just being children."

The Emiliani Project describes itself as "a 100% volunteer organization." Even its board of directors, including Deacon Navarrete as president, and its staff are unpaid volunteers.

The organization was named after St. Jerome Emiliani, a 16th-century Italian priest and former soldier, who founded the Somascan Fathers. The patron saint of orphans and abandoned children, he was known for sup-

porting war orphans and establishing shelters and schools for them.

Napier, who turns 80 in November, began volunteering with The Emiliani Project in 2015 and made his first trip to Colombia the next year. He's visited every year since, with the exception of 2020, when the Colombian government restricted travel because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Construction began last November on a 120-capacity church, named after St. Jerome Emiliani. It is scheduled for completion by the end of the year. Napier plans to participate in a mission trip in November to help complete the church.

At Hogar de Cristo, children receive

shelter, three balanced meals a day, an education, and the opportunity to know God and his love for them, said Napier, who contrasted this with what the typical Colombian child might find elsewhere.

"The standard in Colombia generally is one to two meals a day," he said. As a result, the children at Hogar de Cristo are "growing at a faster rate ... They're thriving."

Napier said that The Emiliani Project has an arrangement with the local school district, whereby the organization provides the classrooms and the district provides teachers. He said that Hogar de Cristo, unlike other local schools, has its own computer lab, thanks to supporters who have donated computers and other technology.

Napier said that some of the children had been in a "very rough place" prior to their arrival.

"Some of them have been trafficked," he explained. "When they show up, some of them are almost catatonic."

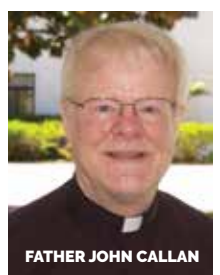
But through the combined efforts of staff, volunteers, and the other children residing there, he said, they "don't stay in their shell very long."

His limited Spanish hasn't prevented him from making connections: "I found over the last 10 years that that's not a problem. ... Through sign language, and gestures, and body language, we find ways to communicate."

Learn more at emilianiproject.org.

Piarists Serving as Missionaries in ... Appalachia?

By Denis Grasska



When you think of "the missions," what do you imagine?

Would you be surprised to learn that there is still mission territory in the continental

United States?

Just ask Piarist Father John Callan, headmaster of The Piarist School, a college-preparatory school located in Hager Hill, Kentucky.

Outside the airport in Lexington, he said, you'll see "beautifully landscaped" horse farms.

"If that's the only thing you see about the Diocese of Lexington," he said, "that's a very poor impression of the diocese."

The Piarist School is located about two and a half hours to the east, in the midst of Appalachia, one of the most impoverished regions in the country.

"Seventy-four percent of the people live below the federal poverty line," said Father Callan. "Addiction to alcohol and drugs is extremely high, and it just seems to continue from generation to generation."

Over the summer, Father Callan made mission appeals at parishes on behalf of The Piarist School, as well as four other mission projects — in



SPECIAL DELIVERY: "Santa" visits children in eastern Kentucky every December with the help of The Piarist School's outreach program. Last Christmas, he delivered toys to more than 900 children.

Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and Puerto Rico — that are sponsored by the Piarists' Province of the United States.

The Piarist School opened in 1990 in Floyd County, Kentucky, under its founding principal, Piarist Father Thomas Carroll. After the 2014-2015 academic year ended, it moved to its present-day location in Johnson County, where it also serves students from the five surrounding counties.

Father Callan became principal about two years ago, after Father Carroll's death.

In the six eastern counties from which the school draws its students, about 85% graduate from high school, but only 15% attend college, he said. But, since The Piarist School opened,

it has graduated 253 students, each of which has continued their education at the college level.

The school currently has 47 students in grades six through 12, whose families pay no tuition.

It has six vans and two buses. Faculty and staff members take the vehicles home in the evening and, each morning, provide the students with free transportation to school.

Students also receive breakfast and lunch at no charge. Father Callan said that some of them are so poor that, if it weren't for these free meals, they would go without.

Father Callan is especially proud of what is known as the Piarist Outreach Program. The program, which pro-

vides students, faculty and staff with an opportunity to help others, offers free food, toiletries, clothing, and even emergency home repairs for the local community.

"One of the nicest things ... about the outreach program is that, every year in December, Santa Claus comes for a visit," said Father Callan, "and, believe it or not, he looks an awful lot like one of our priests."

Last December, he said, Santa brought toys to more than 900 children, traveling up the windy, unpaved roads to do so.

"You should see the smiles on their faces," Father Callan said of the children, for whom it is "rare" to receive Christmas presents.

Father Callan said that about 90% of the people in the region are Christian, but fewer than 1% are Catholic.

"Even though we're all Christian," he said, "some of the denominations that we live with are not always so trusting of the Catholic Church."

He noted that, when Santa delivers the presents, it isn't with a reindeer-drawn sleigh, but rather with a van emblazoned with the name of The Piarist School.

"The Piarist School, the local Catholic school, is there helping Santa with the delivery of those toys," Father Callan said.

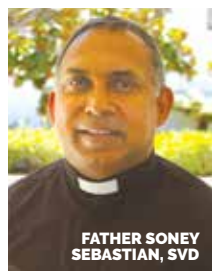
Learn more at piaristchallenge.com.



SOLIDARITY: World Mission Sunday gives Catholics the opportunity to support the Church's missionary work in 1,130 mission dioceses around the globe, assisting people like these in Madagascar.

'World Mission Sunday' Centenary, Sheen Beatification Make for Historic Celebration

By Father Soney Sebastian, SVD



World Mission Sunday 2026 holds a unique place in the life of the Church as Catholics around the world celebrate the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday, a global observance established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 at the request of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

For a century, this annual celebration has united the faithful in prayer, sacrifice and generosity for the Church's missionary work, especially in areas where the Gospel is newly proclaimed and local Churches are still growing. This year, we shall celebrate it on the weekend of Oct. 17-18.

The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for this centennial celebration is "One in Christ, United in Mission." In his message for the 100th World Mission Day, the Holy Father invites the Church to continue its missionary journey with renewed joy and zeal, emphasizing that authentic mission flows from our union with Christ and our communion with one another.

Pope Leo reminds us that the Church's missionary vocation is not the responsibility of a few, but the calling of every baptized believer who shares in the Church's mission of evangelization.

Reflecting on the Gospel prayer of Jesus "that they may all be one" (John 17:21), Pope Leo teaches that unity in Christ is both the source and fruit of mission. In a world often marked by division, conflict and isolation, Christians are called to become signs of reconciliation and hope, witnessing to the love of Christ through prayer, service



and proclamation of the Gospel.

This centenary year is made even more meaningful by the anticipated beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, one of the great missionary voices of the 20th century, on Sept. 24, 2026, in St. Louis, Missouri. This historic moment recognizes a life marked by heroic virtue and faithful service to the Gospel.

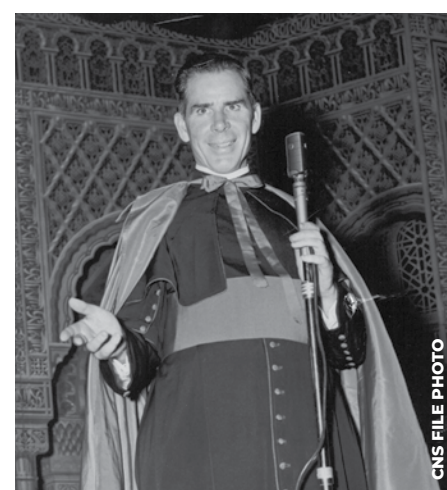
A gifted preacher, communicator and evangelizer, Archbishop Sheen dedicated much of his priestly and episcopal ministry to fostering missionary awareness. As national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the United States, he

inspired countless Catholics to support the missions through prayer and generous giving.

Pope Leo recently praised Archbishop Sheen as a "light of faith, hope and love," recalling the profound influence of his evangelizing witness.

Archbishop Sheen understood that missionary work extends far beyond distant lands. Through radio, television and his powerful preaching, he demonstrated that every Christian can be a missionary by bringing Christ into family life, public life and the culture of the day.

His witness resonates strongly with the theme of World Mission Sunday



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

2026. Like Pope Leo's call to be "One in Christ, United in Mission," Archbishop Sheen believed that a deep, personal relationship with Jesus naturally leads to sharing the Gospel with others.

As we mark 100 years of World Mission Sunday, we give thanks for the missionaries, clergy, religious, and lay faithful who have carried the Good News to every corner of the world. We also recognize our own responsibility in this mission. Through prayer, sacrifice and financial support, Catholics help sustain mission dioceses, seminaries, schools, healthcare ministries and countless evangelization efforts serving some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

May this historic centennial celebration, illuminated by the example of the soon-to-be Blessed Fulton Sheen, inspire us to renew our commitment to Christ and his Church. United in faith and mission, may we answer the Lord's call to be joyful missionary disciples and witnesses of hope to all peoples.

Father Soney Sebastian, SVD, is director of the Office for the Missions in the Diocese of San Diego.