



2019 marks the 100th anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*. To celebrate the centenary, Pope Francis has announced an Extraordinary Missionary Month (EMM OCT 2019), to awaken our awareness of the mission and give a fresh impulse to the responsibility of all baptised Christians to announce the Gospel.

"It is my intention to promote an Extraordinary Missionary Month in October 2019, with the aim of fostering ardour in the Church's 'ad gentes' evangelizing activity", said Pope Francis at the Sunday Angelus on 22 October, World Mission Day, 2017. Subsequently, the Assembly of Major Superiors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, issued details for holding the EMM.

This Extraordinary Missionary Month is intended to enliven our missionary awareness and remind us that we are living in a permanent state of mission. The title of Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter is itself very eloquent: *Maximum Illud* means *That great mission*, or *That great duty*.

The President of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS – Missio), Mgr Giampietro Dal Toso, says that the EMM is an opportunity "to rediscover the missionary nature of our faith". Among other things, he notes "the faith is shared by attracting others to it" and admits that we have sometimes ceased to foster this attraction by turning the faith into "moralising", instead of pointing out what it really is, namely, "a personal relationship with Jesus Christ".

He also believes that in today's "much more mobile" society, in which it becomes more difficult to deal with people on a one-to-one basis than it used to be in the past, we have to continue to try to establish this close relationship with others to bear personal testimony to our faith in every circumstance, however unimportant it might be. And he reminds us that the "missio ad gentes" is not only for the benefit of people living in far-off continents who do not know Christ, but is also for those who live among us here".

Let us encourage our Hospitaller communities to take this Missionary Month seriously. It is part of our vocation to evangelise others, let us not forget. In addition to bearing witness through our personal testimony let us pray in our communities especially throughout this month. The Pontifical Mission Societies have published many wonderful documents which we can find on its Website to be used creatively every single day.

This is why we shall not be distributing material for Hospitaller Mission Week this year, as we have done in the past, but we invite you to read the Guide for the October 2019 Extraordinary Missionary Month, on <http://www.october2019.va/it/mmsott2019.html>. Each community will use the valuable materials in the book for each day of the month of October, and you will also find there the official prayer in five different languages, so that we can all work together with the missionary commitment that the Pope wishes to awaken in each one of us.

I send you all my best wishes, united in our faith in Jesus who shows us the right dimensions of all things, that enable us to see the world with the eyes and the heart of God Himself.

Guide for the October 2019 Extraordinary Missionary Month on the theme, "Baptised and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World".