

**Message from the Standing Committee for Catholic Movements and Associations,
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, for Pentecost 2019,
Sunday, 9 June 2019**

Pentecost this year has a special emphasis with Pope Francis inviting all of us to live October 2019 as an Extraordinary Missionary Month. Throughout it we are invited to pray for a truly missionary conversion of the whole Church.

“We are not selling a product. We have a life to communicate: God, his divine life, his merciful love, his holiness! It is the Holy Spirit who sends us, accompanies us and inspires us. He is the source of our mission. It is he who guides the Church forward.” (Pope Francis, address to the national directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, 1 June 2018).¹

As members of movements and associations of faithful, we readily hear the call to be marked by personal holiness and new creativity so as to draw our world to the One who makes all things new by his Paschal Mystery. When we reflect on our own personal experience of faith, we call to mind those who guided us on the journey, so that we take our vocation seriously as people who are baptized and sent. Throughout the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October, we will be offered a number of brief biographies of missionary witnesses as well as daily commentaries on the Word of God, so as to awaken our communities to missionary responsibility. Let us be reminded that our Christian identity is strengthened as we give Christ to others: “the Christian faith remains ever young when it is open to the mission” (Pope Francis, 20 May 2018).

Saint Paul reminds us that “we have this treasure in jars of clay” (2 Cor 4 :7). The various scandals denounced within the Church these past months are a hindrance to trust; consequently, we are called more than ever before to boldly go out to the peripheries², enthusiastically offering “the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15). In celebrating the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum illud* of Pope Benedict XV which sought to give a new impetus to missionary responsibility in favour of all nations (*ad gentes*), the Holy Father wished to reengage us in a permanent state of mission.

The first proclamation of salvation motivates us to urgent collaboration with others, which includes fostering unity, charity, and a dialogue of salvation. We truly desire that the younger generations with all their desires will discover a yearning for God, to seek him, to love him, and to serve him. They will draw from this living water to the extent that they remain open to forgiveness, gathering together in community and walking with the poor. We are aware that on many levels, our people are getting older and it can be difficult to build bridges between generations. This is why we hope that, together, we might joyfully prepare for this extraordinary missionary month, when possible with the young people of our communities, overcoming intergenerational distance, and recognizing the missionary wealth as God’s gift to all. Younger generations are open to encountering of cultures, and can teach us about this natural and necessary horizon of the Church’s missionary activity in the world. “Significant and creative Christian presences in places that are predominantly indifferent or hostile to the faith, where Christian witness lives daily with the tragedy of the martyrdom of blood, ecclesial movements, lay associations, missionary institutes and new ecclesial forms of community life, are all ecclesial experiences to keep in mind in order to understand the *missio ad gentes* in a paradigmatic reconfiguration of the entire mission of the Church sent into the world for the salvation and transformation of the world.”³

May the breath of the Holy Spirit take hold of us and through our witness bring forth the fruits of the Good News!

Standing Committee for Relations with Movements and Associations
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180601_pontificie-opere-missionarie.html

² “Human, cultural and religious settings still foreign to the Gospel of Jesus and to the sacramental presence of the Church represent the extreme peripheries. The most desolate periphery of all is where mankind, in need of Christ, remains indifferent to the faith or shows hatred for the fullness of life in God.”

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/papa-francesco_20180520_giornata-missionaria2018.html

³ http://www.october2019.va/content/dam/october2019/documenti/la-guida-mmsott2019/DEF%20WEB_Interno_Mese%20Missionario%20-%20ING_v6-1.pdf