

LETTER FOR WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2025

“Missionaries of Hope among all Peoples.”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

today, with the whole Church across the world, we celebrate World Mission Sunday – a day when we are invited to renew our call to bring Christ’s Good News to every nation, culture, and heart.

Our Late Holy Father, Pope Francis, gave us this year’s theme: *“Missionaries of Hope among all Peoples.”* These words remind us that the heart of mission is not only to speak of Christ, but to share His hope – the deep, unshakeable assurance that God is with us, that His love is stronger than death, and that no one is beyond His care. This year we also rejoice to walk under the leadership of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, who served for many years as a missionary priest in the mountains and villages of Peru. He knows, from lived experience, how hope is often the first gift a missionary brings – hope that gives courage to the poor, dignity to the forgotten, and faith to those struggling in darkness.

Our readings at Mass today are full of this hope.

In the First Reading from the Book of Exodus, Moses stands on the hilltop, arms raised in prayer as the battle rages below. When he grows weary, Aaron and Hur hold up his hands until victory is won. Here is hope in action – the people of God working together, sustaining one another until the struggle is over.

In the Responsorial Psalm we proclaimed: “Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Hope is not wishful thinking; it is rooted in the Lord who never abandons us. Missionaries carry this hope into places where life is fragile, and people are tempted to despair.

In the Second Reading, St Paul urges us to “proclaim the message... in season and out of season.” This is the language of patient hope, trusting that the Word we speak will bear fruit in God’s time.

And in the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow who refuses to give up her hope for justice. He tells us to pray always and never lose heart. This perseverance is the heartbeat of mission – the steady witness of faith, even when the wait is long.

On this Mission Sunday, I want to share with you how your hope is changing lives in Bolivia – a country of great natural beauty and deep faith, but where many live in poverty and isolation. In one Catholic parish in the city of Oruro, Fr Iver runs a parish which also has a health centre, the St John Paul II Clinic, which provides much-needed medical care and medicines to some of the lowest-income families in the diocese. Most children in the parish

suffer ill-health and expectant mothers are too poor to have access to essential scans. With your help, we will provide an ultrasound scanner for the parish clinic. This will allow early detection of complications, safeguarding the lives of mothers and babies. This is not just medical equipment; it is hope made visible – hope that every life is precious and cared for.

In another remote part of Bolivia, Fr Rosendo looks after two parishes. In one of the parishes young people and adults have no access to basic equipment to study or learn in order to have the hope of improving their lives. In the other the faithful gather for Mass under a simple shelter, but there is no space for catechesis, parish meetings, or youth activities. With your support, we will help build a modest parish hall – a warm, dry place where faith can grow, where children can learn the Gospel, and where the community can come together and support one another. For them, this will be a sign that the wider Church remembers them, a beacon of hope that they are not alone.

You can read more about these projects in the Missio Scotland magazine and on the Missio Scotland website.

Hope is the most precious gift you can give. It changes how people see themselves, their future, and God's presence in their lives. You can be a Missionary of Hope today through your prayer, your generosity, and your witness. Like Moses with his arms raised and the widow who never gave up, pray for missionaries and for the people they serve. Pray for the mothers and children in Bolivia, for the young people, for the parish building project, and for Pope Leo XIV as he leads the Church with a missionary heart. Give as generously as you can to today's World Mission Sunday collection, knowing that your gift – large or small – will become hope in the hands of those who serve. And live that hope in your daily life – in your families, workplaces, and communities. Be the one who lifts others up, who refuses to let despair have the last word, who speaks of God's goodness even in hard times.

Without hope, the human heart shrinks. Without hope, faith fades. Without hope, love becomes a burden rather than a joy. But with hope – the kind rooted in Christ – people stand tall, persevere in trials, and believe in the promise of eternal life. Hope is what the missionary brings before any building is started or programme launched. It is what you bring when you pray for someone far away. It is what your donation delivers when a midwife uses the new scanner to reassure an anxious mother, or when children gather in a parish hall to learn about Jesus.

Dear brothers and sisters, the call of Pope Francis, now taken up by Pope Leo XIV, is urgent: Be Missionaries of Hope to all Peoples. Today, in the strength of God's Word and in the communion of the Church, let us renew our promise to carry that hope – across the street, across the country and across the world.

With gratitude, prayers, and every blessing,

yours sincerely in Christ,

Fr Vincent Lockhart

National Director of Missio Scotland

The Pontifical Mission Societies