About the Extraordinary Missionary Month

PROMPTED BY AN ANNIVERSARY
November 30, 2019, will mark that centenary of the promulgation of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, with which Pope Benedict XV wished to give new impetus to the missionary call to proclaim the Gospel. On the occasion of this important anniversary, Pope Francis has called for the whole Church to observe an Extraordinary Missionary Month in October 2019, which is World Mission Month. Wrote Pope Francis in his *Letter for the centenary of the promulgation of the Apostolic Letter “Maximum illud” on the activity of missionaries in the world*, 22.10.2017:

“The Apostolic Letter Maximum Illud called for transcending national boundaries and bearing witness, with prophetic spirit and evangelical boldness, to God’s saving will through the Church’s universal mission. May the approaching centenary of that Letter serve as an incentive...(to) be open to the joyful newness of the Gospel. In these, our troubled times, rent by the tragedies of war and menaced by the baneful tendency to accentuate differences and to incite conflict, may the Good News that in Jesus forgiveness triumphs over sin, life defeats death and love conquers fear, be proclaimed to the world with renewed fervor, and instill trust and hope in everyone.”

CONNECTED TO A SYNOD
During the Extraordinary Missionary Month, a Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region will also take place. Pope Francis, speaking to the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies (June 2018) explained the connection between the two events:

“As you know, in October 2019, the Extraordinary Missionary Month, we will celebrate the Synod for the Amazon. In response to the concerns expressed by many of the faithful, laity and pastors alike, I wished to convocate this meeting in order to pray and reflect on the challenges faced in the evangelization of these South American lands that are home to important particular Churches. I hope that the conjuncture of these two events may help us fix our gaze on Jesus Christ while addressing problems and issues, resources and needs; may it also help us renew our commitment of service to the Gospel for the salvation of the men and women living in those lands. We pray that the Synod for the Amazon can help provide a more evangelical approach to missionary work in this area of the world that is so troubled, so unjustly exploited and so much in need of the salvation of Jesus Christ.”
THEME
The theme for the Extraordinary Missionary Month is: “Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World.” Awakening awareness of the missio ad gentes, and reinvigorating the sense of responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel with new enthusiasm, are themes that combine the pastoral concern of Pope Benedict XV in his Apostolic Letter Maximum Illud, published 100 years ago, with the missionary vitality expressed by Pope Francis in his recent Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium: “Missionary action is the paradigm of every work of the Church.” (EG 15)

LOGO
The logo of the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019 is a missionary cross where the primary colors refer to the five continents. The Cross is the instrument and direct sign of communion between God and man for the universality of our mission, and through its vibrant colors, a sign of victory and resurrection. The world is transparent because the action of evangelization has no barriers or boundaries, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christian charity and the world transfigured in the Spirit overcome distances and open the horizon of our minds and hearts. The words Baptized and Sent next to the image indicate the two characteristics of every Christian: baptism and proclamation.

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WAYS TO PREPARE AND CELEBRATE

Pope Francis has indicated four dimensions, or ways to prepare for and live out the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019. These four dimensions are:

1. a **personal encounter** with Jesus Christ alive in His Church: Eucharist, Word of God, personal and communal prayer,
2. the **witness** of the Saints, the Missionary Martyrs, and the Confessors of the Faith, who are unique expressions of the Churches throughout the world,
3. biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological **formation** regarding the *missio ad gentes*,
4. **missionary charity** as a material support for the immense work of evangelization, especially the *missio ad gentes* and Christian formation in Churches that are most in need.

Resources in these areas are provided on the Pontifical Mission Societies (MISSIO) website at [this link](http://www.missio.org).