



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE VI AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS (CAM6)**

[Ponce, Porto Rico - 9-24 November 2024]

Dear Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo,

Dear brothers and sisters:

You have the joy of participating in this sixth American Missionary Congress, precisely in the year that I wanted to dedicate to prayer, in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025. And you have also prepared yourselves for this event with a prayer that I wanted to offer you on this occasion.

It is a prayer addressed to the Holy Trinity, first acknowledging the Father as the merciful God, who, in His Son Jesus Christ, has revealed to us the “Good News”, and then beseeching him, through the Holy Spirit, to pour out his Love and renew the face of the earth.

This is the foundation of mission: to recognize ourselves as sons and daughters, touched by God's mercy. We cannot give what we do not have, we cannot express what we have not experienced, what our eyes have not seen and our hands have not touched. The foundation of mission is the experience of God, the encounter in love with Jesus, He reveals the “Good News” to us, He shows us the Father.

An example of this marvel is provided by – the prayer continues – the many missionaries who, by words and deeds, have proclaimed Him. Jesus was a missionary, a “prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (*Lk 24:19*). Words uttered before God, His Father, in the intimate prayer that preceded all his actions. Works performed before His Father in a life totally given over to His will, so that he could bear witness to the greatest love before His people. This is the message that missionaries have continued to translate in every age, in every place, in every language. “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (*Mt 5,16*).

This is the vocation of the baptized person to which the prayer refers, to see God, to see Him in the world, in the brother, to have “Christified” eyes and with them a compassionate, welcoming, merciful gaze. As a beautiful hymn from the Liturgy of the Hours says: ‘I saw you, yes, when I was a child and was baptized in water, and, cleansed of old guilt, without veils I could see you’. A look that conveys the joy that overflows our hearts. The joy of the disciples after their encounter with the Risen One, which they cannot contain and which impels them to set out on their journey.

The Holy Spirit works this wonder in us and puts in us the words to speak to God (*Rm* 8:14) and to men (*Mt* 10:19). That is why, from the beginning of the Church, the first thing the disciples do, in the Upper Room, in assembly, together with Mary, is to invoke the Spirit. Through His life-giving power we can transmit the message in any language, yes, because the Church speaks all languages, but, above all, because she always speaks the same language. It is the language of love, comprehensible to all people, because it is part of her very essence, that of being the image of God. In this way, the joy of the Spirit does not end with them, but is expansive, it communicates itself, calling us to walk together, as God's faithful People, in synodality and mutual listening.

Listening to God and our brothers, we can perceive how at times His image appears blurred before our tired eyes, and it would seem that we lack the strength to walk on. We must not abandon our prayer, ceaselessly asking the Father to pour out His love, His life-giving Spirit, so that it renews the face of this earth, wounded by our injustices and the suffering we have caused.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son and Bride of the Holy Spirit, is presented as that ark of the Covenant, that first Tabernacle which, receiving Jesus, sets out on the way, in service. She is a model of evangelization to offer Christ to all humanity; because in prayer she “kept these things in her heart” (*Lk* 2:51), because in the assembly of believers she invokes the gift of the Holy Spirit for the Church. Imitating her example of self-giving and sustained by her maternal and provident care, let us always be her missionary disciples to the ends of the earth. May she watch over you and may Jesus bless you always.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 9 November 2024

FRANCIS

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 21 November 2024