



## DOES THE CHURCH HAVE A MISSION, OR DOES THE MISSION HAVE A CHURCH?

The above question seems rather confusing when we first look at it. What does it mean? The church is missionary by its very nature, so it's normal to say that the church has a mission.

In today's gospel we are told, Jesus began to preach, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

After proclaiming his mission Jesus called Peter and his brother Andrew, both fishermen to follow him. And further on two other brothers, fishermen James and John sons of Zebedee, to follow him. And then later he called the other apostles too, for what? To proclaim the mission that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Basic to any understanding of the mission of the church is the realization that the church did not decide upon the mission. The church was entrusted with this mission of Jesus, who received it from his Father. The Church was brought to birth for the sake of the mission. So the mission was proclaimed by Jesus first and then the followers were sent to evangelize. When Pope John XXIII opened the second ecumenical council, known as Vatican II in the early nineteen sixties, a few cardinals were not very keen on it. Then one of them said to Pope John XXIII, 'Holy Father, I am not in favor in opening up the church, I pray that the Holy Spirit will assist you'. The Pope replied, 'my brother, it's not the Holy Spirit who will assist me, but it's I who will assist the Holy Spirit'.

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Pope John XXIII, was correct. It's not our mission, but God's mission. And as church we are custodians of God's mission. The church is not the originator of the mission, God is.

Otherwise, we will be disagreeing among ourselves all the time who is in charge of the mission. An example in today's second reading shows the division in the early church, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas", are you not merely human", St Paul says. "I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the growth." It's God's mission.

Returning to the above question - Does the church have a mission or does the mission have a church? The church does indeed have a mission, but it cannot claim ownership of it. The mission is God's. For its part, the church was brought to birth in order to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven as a 'sacrament of salvation' for all the world.

**Reflection by Glenn de Cruz, CSsR**

# Novena notes



3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Of Ordinary Time  
Year A  
26 January 2020

## Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 26 January	Is 8:23-9:3; 1 Cor 1: 10-13,17; Mt 4:12-23 The Lord is my light and my help.
Mon, 27 January St. Angela Merici	2 Sam 5:1-7,10; Mk 3:22-30 My truth and my love shall be with him.
Tue, 28 January St. Thomas Aquinas	2 Sam 6:12-15,17-19; Mk 3:31-35 Who is the king of glory? He, the Lord, he is the king of glory.
Wed, 29 January	2 Sam 7:4-17; Mk 4:1-20 I will keep my love for him always.
Thu, 30 January	2 Sam 7:18-19,24-29; Mk 4:21-25 The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.
Fri, 31 January St. John Bosco	2 Sam 11:1-4,5-10,13-17; Mk 4:26-34 Have mercy on us, Lord, for we have sinned.
Sat, 1 February	2 Sam 12:1-7,10-17; Mk 4:35-41 A pure heart create for me, O God.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)  
Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm  
Confession: Half an hour before all Masses except the morning Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)  
Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS  
Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon\*, 5.30pm  
\*2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - Mass in Tagalog, subject to the availability of priests.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY : 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS  
Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION  
English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm  
Mandarin: 2.30pm  
Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION  
Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)  
6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

# Novena notes

## 25<sup>th</sup> January, Conversion of St. Paul

St. Paul the Apostle was the greatest of the early Christian missionaries. He first appears in the Acts of the Apostles under the name of Saul. Saul was raised in the Jewish faith as a Pharisee trained in the strict observance of God's Law. He believed the Law should be obeyed by himself and all Jews. Saul was upset by the early Christian Church, believing that the early Christians had broken away from their Jewish traditions. He persecuted the Church in Jerusalem. As the first Christian martyr Stephen was being stoned to death, Saul looked after the cloaks of the persecutors (Acts 7:58).

Paul then travelled to Damascus to persecute the followers of the Way. On the road to Damascus Saul had an encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19, Galatians 1: 13-14). Jesus asked, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Paul replied, "Who are you, sir?" Jesus responded, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9: 4 - 5). Jesus then sent Saul into Damascus to wait for further instructions. Saul was shaken and blinded by the experience. When a Christian named Ananias came and baptized Saul, his blindness went away. As a result of this encounter Saul became a follower of Christ. He was now convinced that fellowship with the risen Jesus Christ, not the observance of the Law, was all that was needed to receive God's promise of salvation. (Galatians 1:11-12; 3:1-5)

Saul, whose name now became Paul, went to Jerusalem to consult with Peter (Galatians 1: 18). After his first missionary journey, Paul was called by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. He spent the rest of his life journeying on his missions, establishing local churches, and writing to them when he heard of their accomplishments and failures. Paul's letters are the earliest records of the life and history of the early Church. As inspired by the Holy Spirit Paul's letters are part of the Canon of the New Testament. As a record of the happenings in the early Church they are in invaluable record of the expansion of the Christianity.

After his experience with Jesus Christ, Paul realized that he was not alone on the road to salvation. Jesus Christ has already accomplished salvation for us. In faith and Baptism, Christians receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is our constant guide. The Holy Spirit helps us to live in relationship with God and others.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/the-conversion-of-saint-paul-the-apostle>

## Schedules for Chinese New Year

### Operating Hours of Reception

25<sup>th</sup> January: 7.30am to 8pm  
26<sup>th</sup> January: 8.30am to 7.30pm  
27<sup>th</sup> January: Closed

### Operating Hours of St. Alphonsus Bookroom

25<sup>th</sup> January: Closed  
26<sup>th</sup> January: Closed  
27<sup>th</sup> January: Closed

### Mass Times

25<sup>th</sup> January: Masses and Devotion as usual.

26<sup>th</sup> January: Masses as usual.

27<sup>th</sup> January: Masses at 8am and 6.30pm. There will be NO lunch-time Mass.



## Novena Family Walk

Come! Join us for the "Novena 70th Anniversary Family Walk" with Love and Gratitude to celebrate Novena 70 years of existence.

Date: 14 March 2020

Time: 8:00am to 11.30am

Duration of the Walk: 2 hours

Distance of the Walk: 3 km

Venue: Gardens by the Bay

Registration Fee: \$10 per person  
Registration Form available at the Reception.

Registration will close on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and comes with a Goodie Bag, Food & Beverage and Lucky Draw.

## Novena Church Altar Servers

The Novena Church Altar Servers are having their annual recruitment drive. Young people aged 20 years old and below who are interested to join this ministry may pick up a form from the reception office. Registration closes on 31<sup>st</sup> January.