

February Mission Intention

We pray that in the mission territories where the struggle against disease is most urgent, Christian communities may witness to the presence of Christ to those who suffer



We Proclaim Christ Crucified...

Country Focus: Philippines: Bearing the Burdens Together

The Philippines is located in Southeast Asia and is comprised of more than 7,100 islands. Poverty is a reality throughout this nation, particularly in the rural parts. This lack of basic necessities also lessens the overall health



of the people. For example, they are more susceptible to an age-old health crisis known as Tuberculosis. This is a highly infectious disease that attacks the lungs. The Philippines is ranked 9th among 22 poor nations where this disease is prevalent. When coupled with malnutrition, diabetes or HIV, tuberculosis poses a great threat to the body. All of this creates a stigma around this disease.

Addressing the suffering associated with tuberculosis means creating conditions that can increase basic health and nutrition, treating the disease and bringing healing to communities. This is at the heart of Christians ministering to the sick and suffering in Philippines.

One example is a community health project in Maguindanao Province that works within rural communities to provide needed support to patients by creating clinics, training volunteers and providing transportation to remote areas. The program helps to break down the stigma attached to infectious diseases by building up the community to care for itself.



God's Word for Mission

Promoting Knowledge of Faith

"Jesus went around Galilee...proclaiming the Gospel and curing every disease and illness among the people. They brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain...and he cured them" (Matt. 5:23-24).

"Jesus' preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them" (#1503 Catechism).

Saints for Mission - St. Damien the Leper

Education for Community Life

St. Damien, born in 1840, was originally from Belgium and became a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who were serving the people of the Hawaiian Islands. When he arrived in 1864, the Kingdom of Hawaii was facing many diseases that had been brought by foreign traders and sailors, including leprosy which was thought to be very contagious and lethal.

A leper colony was established on Molokai in an effort to quarantine those infected. With little support and lack of order, the leper colony became a living hell.



Fr. Damien was sent alone to minister in this terrible suffering.

He served the bodies and souls of the lepers. He brought dignity to the dying. He enacted laws and brought schools, an orphanage, housing, farming and a general improvement in daily life. In 1884, he contracted leprosy - the very disease he was sent to minister to. Despite this, he continued to serve until he died in 1889.

Today, St. Damien is the patron of those living with HIV and AIDS. He was canonized on Oct. 9, 2009.

Respect for Human Dignity

We are created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, all human beings have an inherent dignity that must be respected from life beginning in the womb to natural death. Christian life and mission means to live as if people matter. Christian charity means caring for the poor, the sick, the aged, the homeless and the stranger whether that person be friend or enemy.

Christian charity, which is rooted in respect for human dignity, becomes the foundation of all Catholic social teaching.



Living Mission

Moral Formation

From the very beginning of the Church, Christians set a new standard for human relationships based on charity in the way that Christ taught us. The way Christians cared for the sick, outsiders and strangers inspired a movement of healing that transformed the Western world and beyond.

Today, we can join in this movement of Christian charity in small and large ways including:

- Pray for the sick and needy you know and don't know.
- Visit a sick person you know.



- Assist an elderly neighbor or family member when needed.
- Welcome a new person who lives with a disability or chronic condition.
- Contribute to efforts to assist those facing disease, natural disasters and violent conditions.
- Promote respect for life at all stages.
- Avoid harming the dignity of others through your words or deeds.
- When you are sick or in pain, seek God's healing. Consider your bond with all those who suffer in the world.

Petitions for Mission

Liturgical Education

- ✚ Let us pray for those suffering disease in mission lands due to poverty and lack of basic care. May they receive healing of mind and bodies and live in improved conditions for health.
- ✚ Let us pray for those who are vulnerable due to age, physical or mental ability or status in society. May their dignity as persons made in God's image be upheld and respected.
- ✚ Let us pray for those who endure ongoing pain or suffering. May they know the compassion of Christ who suffers with them and the love of the Christian community.
- ✚ Let us pray for the healing of afflictions that harm relationships of families, communities and nations.

Prayer for Mission

Missionary Initiative

Dear Jesus, you came to heal the sick and love the poor, the stranger and the enemy. Show us how to bring your love and compassion to those who suffer in our world. Amen.