

October  
2026

South Africa,  
Botswana,  
eSwatini



# Our Mission

Missio-SA CBC





July  
2026



Pontifical.Mission.Societies



[www.missio-sacbc.org](http://www.missio-sacbc.org)



# Our Mission

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## Support the Missions

As Missionary Disciples we can support Christ's mission by:

- \* Being faithful to our baptismal commitment in our daily life
- \* Praying daily for the Mission of the Christ
- \* Helping your parish to be Mission Aware
- \* Make a financial donation to help the missions

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# From the Editor ...



Dear Friends in Mission,

There are moments in the life of the Church when we are invited not simply to celebrate what has been achieved, but to rediscover why we do what we do. The centenary of World Mission Sunday, which we celebrate on 18 October 2026, is one such moment.

For a hundred years, Catholics throughout the world have responded to the invitation to pray for the missions and support the work of evangelisation. Countless communities have benefited from this generosity, including many here in South Africa, Botswana and Eswatini. Churches have been built, catechists trained, priests formed and the Gospel proclaimed in places where the Church has limited resources.

But the real significance of World Mission Sunday cannot be measured simply by the money collected or the projects supported. Its greatest contribution has been to remind generations of Catholics that mission belongs to all of us.

This year's theme, "*One in Christ, United in Mission*," asks us to reflect on what that responsibility means in our own lives. Our unity in Christ is not simply something we profess when we gather for Mass. It should influence how we live, how we treat one another and how we respond to the needs of those around us.

As you read through this edition of *Our Mission*, you will encounter people whose lives remind us that missionary discipleship can take many different forms.

We reflect on the life and witness of Blessed Fulton Sheen, whose extraordinary ability to communicate the Gospel brought the Christian message into millions of homes. Long before the arrival of social media, he recognised that the Church must be willing to use the means of communication available to reach people wherever they are. Despite his public success, his missionary work was rooted in a deep personal relationship with Christ.

We also welcome the historic appointment of Sister Mary Teresa Barron as President of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Her appointment is particularly

significant, not simply because she is the first woman to hold this position, but because she brings years of practical missionary experience. Her appointment is a reminder of the extraordinary contribution women have made, and continue to make, to the missionary life of the Church.

These two very different missionary lives have something important in common. Neither regarded mission as simply a task to be performed. For both, it was a response to Christ's call, expressed through the gifts and opportunities entrusted to them.

It's important to remember this because we sometimes associate missionary activity with extraordinary people doing extraordinary things in distant countries. In doing so, we can overlook the missionary opportunities that exist much closer to home. The parent who passes on the faith to a child, the catechist who patiently prepares young people for the sacraments, the parishioner who welcomes a stranger, or the person who stands alongside someone experiencing hardship is also participating in the mission of the Church.

Of course, prayer and financial support for the missions remain essential. Our contributions to World Mission Sunday are an expression of solidarity with communities whose needs are often far greater than their resources. But our generosity must be accompanied by a willingness to live the Gospel ourselves.

As we celebrate this centenary, we are invited to do more than look back with gratitude. We are asked to reflect on how we can make our parishes more missionary, our communities more welcoming and our own lives more convincing witnesses to Christ.

The next hundred years of mission will be shaped, in part, by the choices we make today. We have inherited a remarkable missionary legacy. Our responsibility is not simply to preserve it, but to carry it forward. The mission continues, and each of us has a part to play.

Yours in Mission,

Fr Jerry



# The Mission Continues

100 YEARS OF WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

Fr Jeremiah Browne

**As we prepare to celebrate the centenary of World Mission Sunday on 18 October 2026, we have an opportunity to reflect on a hundred years of extraordinary change in the life of the Church.**

In 1926, the Catholic Church in many parts of Africa was still developing its local structures and leadership. A century later, the Church is deeply rooted in the soil of Africa. Local communities have grown in faith and confidence, vocations have flourished, and priests and religious from these communities now serve the Church not only at home, but in countries around the world. The Church that once welcomed missionaries from other parts of the world is now sending missionaries of its own.

The origins of World Mission Sunday go back to 1926, when Pope Pius XI, responding to a proposal from the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, established an annual day of prayer and financial support for the missionary work of the Church. His intention was to remind Catholics everywhere that the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel belonged not only to missionaries working in distant lands, but to every baptised person.

The idea, however, had much earlier roots. In 1822, a young French woman, Pauline Marie Jaricot, founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, France. She believed that ordinary Catholics, regardless of their financial circumstances, could make a meaningful contribution to the Church's mission through prayer and small, regular donations. Her vision was simple but far-reaching. She believed that the missionary work of the Church should be supported by the whole Church.

Pauline's vision continues to inspire as we celebrate the centenary of World Mission Sunday. Each year, Catholics across the world are invited to pray for the missions and contribute to a common fund that supports the growth and development of local Churches, particularly those with limited resources. Through the Pontifical Mission Societies, this generosity helps sustain evangelisation, the formation of priests and catechists, and the pastoral work of communities, including many here in Southern Africa.

But World Mission Sunday is about much more than raising money. At its heart is the conviction that every baptised person has a part to play in the Church's mission. We may not all be called to leave our homes and travel to distant

countries, but we are all called to share our faith and make the love of Christ visible in the communities where we live. This is the message at the heart of this year's centenary theme, "One in Christ, United in Mission."

The theme is particularly relevant to the Church in Southern Africa. Over the past century, we have witnessed remarkable growth and development, but the challenges facing the Church today are very different from those of a hundred years ago.

We live in a rapidly changing world. Poverty, unemployment, migration, family breakdown and growing social divisions continue to place enormous pressure on our communities. At the same time, advances in technology and social media are transforming how people communicate, form relationships and understand the world around them. Against this backdrop, many people, particularly the young, are becoming increasingly disconnected from the life of the Church.

These realities present us with an important challenge. Are we simply maintaining the Church we have inherited, or are we actively building a missionary Church capable of responding to the needs of our time?

Much of our energy in parish life is understandably devoted to maintaining buildings, managing finances, preparing people for the sacraments and organising parish activities. All of these are necessary, but they are not ends in themselves. They exist to serve the mission of the Church.

As we look towards the next hundred years, we need to ask ourselves what kind of Church we hope to leave to future generations. Will it be a Church concerned primarily with its own survival, or one that continues to reach beyond itself to share the Good News of Jesus Christ?



I would hope that the Church in Southern Africa in 2126 will be one where faith is alive in our families and communities, where all the baptised take greater responsibility for evangelisation, and where young people are not simply regarded as the future of the Church but are recognised as an essential part of its mission today.

I would hope to see a Church that is known not only for its worship and traditions, but also for its compassion, its commitment to justice, its welcome of strangers and its willingness to stand alongside those who are poor, marginalised or forgotten.

Of course, none of us knows what the Church will look like a hundred years from now. But we do know that the decisions we make today will help shape its future.

As we celebrate this centenary, we give thanks for the missionaries, catechists, priests, religious and countless ordinary Catholics whose faith, courage and generosity have shaped the Church we have inherited. Their legacy is not simply a collection of buildings, institutions and traditions. It is a living faith that has been handed on from one generation to the next.

Perhaps the greatest tribute we can pay them is not simply to preserve what they built, but to continue the mission to which they dedicated their lives.



## Pope Leo XIV's MESSAGE FOR WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2026

World Mission Day 2026 marks 100 years since Pope Pius XI established this annual celebration of prayer, solidarity and support for the church's mission. Pope Leo XIV invites the whole church to renew the fire of our missionary vocation and to enter a new missionary age with joy, zeal, generosity and trust.

“As we reflect on being one in Christ and united in mission, let us allow ourselves to be guided and inspired by divine grace, “to renew in ourselves the fire of our missionary vocation” and advance together in the commitment to evangelization.”

(Homily, Jubilee of the Missionary World and of Migrants, 5 October 2025)

### One in Christ

*Missionary disciples united in him  
and with our brothers and sisters*

The mystery of union with Christ lies at the heart of mission. Before his Passion, Jesus prayed to the Father, “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us” (Jn 17:21). These words reveal Jesus’ deepest desire, as well as the identity of the Church as a community of his disciples.

Being a Christian is not primarily about practices or ideas; it is a life in union with Christ, in which we share in his filial relationship with the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Being “one in Christ” calls us to keep our gaze fixed on the Lord.

The more united we are in Christ, the better able we will be to carry out together the mission that he entrusts to us.

### United in Mission

*That the world may believe in  
Christ the Lord*

The unity of disciples is not an end in itself; it is directed towards mission. Jesus states this clearly: “So that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17:21). It is through the witness of a reconciled, fraternal and united community that the proclamation of the Gospel acquires its full communicative power.

Unity in mission means safeguarding and nurturing the spirituality of communion and missionary cooperation.

Missionary unity should not be understood as uniformity, but rather as the convergence of different charisms for the same purpose, namely to make Christ's love visible and to invite everyone to encounter him.

### Mission to Love

*Proclaiming, living and sharing  
God's faithful love*

If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. The Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the world is not an abstract ideal; it is the Gospel of God's faithful love, which became flesh in the face and life of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the disciples and the Church as a whole is to continue the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit: a mission born of love, lived in love, and leading to love. In fact, the Lord himself, in his great prayer to the Father before his Passion, after invoking unity among his disciples, concludes: “so that the love with which you have loved me may be in

them, and I in them” (Jn 17:26). Impelled by the love of Christ, the Apostles then went out to evangelize for Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:14).

#### HOW WE CAN TAKE PART IN THE MISSION TODAY



##### PRAY

for missionaries  
and the people  
they serve.



##### LIVE

the Gospel  
where God  
has placed you.



##### SHARE

your faith  
with courage  
and joy.



##### GIVE

generously to  
support the  
Church's mission.



##### LOVE

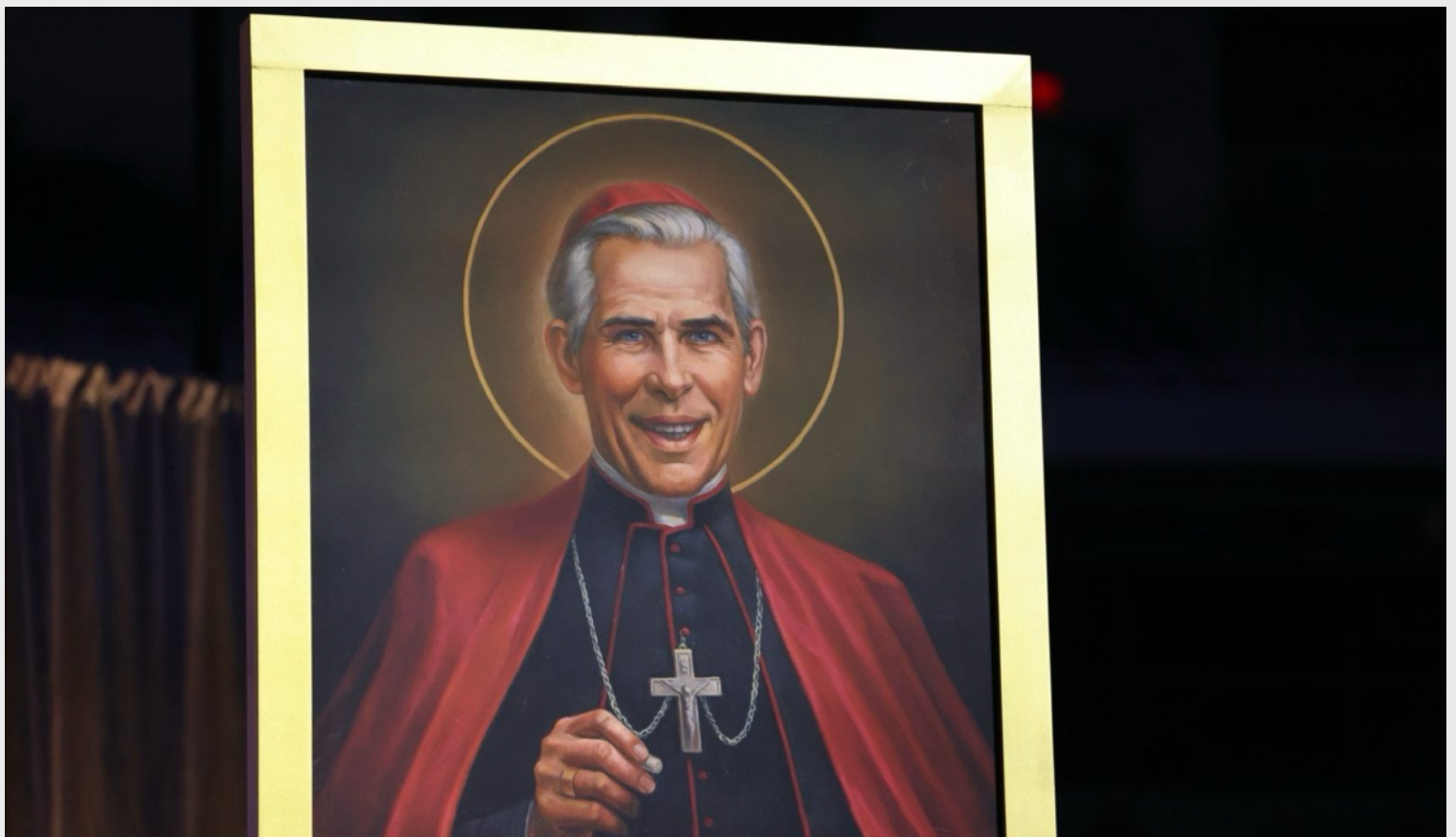
so that others  
may encounter  
Christ through you.

**South Africa  
Botswana  
eSwatini**

Holy Father, make us one in Christ, rooted in his love that unites and renews. May all members of the Church be united in mission, docile to the Holy Spirit, courageous in bearing witness to the Gospel, proclaiming and daily embodying your faithful love for all creatures.



Scan me!



Official portrait of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen

## Blessed Fulton Sheen: A Life Given to the Gospel

**The beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, former National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the USA, reminds us that the heart of mission is not fame, success or recognition, but allowing Christ to work through us.**

On 24 September 2026, thousands of Catholics gathered in St Louis, Missouri, for the beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, one of the most remarkable evangelisers of the twentieth century. The occasion was more than a celebration of a gifted preacher. It was an invitation to rediscover what it means to be a missionary disciple in a world where the Gospel must continually find new ways of reaching people's hearts.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, who presided at the celebration on behalf of Pope Leo XIV, drew attention to something that could easily be overlooked amid Sheen's many achievements. His greatness lay not simply in being an eloquent preacher, a gifted communicator or one of the most recognisable religious figures of his time, but in his deep relationship with Jesus Christ and his willingness to

place his considerable gifts at the service of the Gospel.

For sixteen years, from 1950 to 1966, Sheen served as National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the United States. His contribution to the missionary life of the Church was immense. Through radio, television, publications and personal appeals, he helped Catholics recognise that the Church's mission was not simply the responsibility of priests and religious working in distant countries, but a responsibility shared by every baptised person.

His television programme, *Life Is Worth Living*, attracted an estimated 30 million viewers each week. Long before social media and digital evangelisation, Sheen demonstrated how modern communications could become powerful instruments for sharing the Christian message. At a time when anti-Catholic prejudice was still deeply rooted in American society, he helped change public perceptions of the Catholic Church. Each week, millions of Americans, many of whom were not Catholic, welcomed him into their homes through television.

With intelligence, warmth and humour, he addressed the questions and concerns of everyday life, breaking down prejudices and demonstrating that the Catholic faith had something meaningful to offer everyone.

Yet his concern was never simply to reach large audiences. He wanted people to encounter Christ. Cardinal Tagle captured this beautifully in his homily when he declared, "Blessed are you when Jesus sees you, knows you, calls you, sends you and labours with you." Those words remind us that mission begins with a relationship. We cannot meaningfully proclaim a Christ whom we do not know. Nor can we regard missionary work as something separate from our own spiritual lives. Prayer, discipleship and evangelisation belong together.

Sheen understood this deeply. Despite an extraordinarily demanding schedule, he maintained the discipline of spending an hour each day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. His public ministry drew its strength from this private encounter with the Lord. It was this spiritual foundation that enabled him to remain faithful to his calling amid the pressures of public life.

For Sheen, the success of evangelisation was never measured simply by the number of people reached or converted. He understood that the work of bringing people to faith ultimately belonged to God. He saw himself as someone who helped people find the entrance to God's house. It was Christ, not Sheen, who

**"Blessed are you when Jesus  
sees you, knows you, calls  
you, sends you and labours  
with you."**

welcomed them inside. Despite his extraordinary popularity and influence, he never lost sight of the fact that he was a servant of the Gospel, not its centre. His example reminds us that the effectiveness of our missionary efforts depends not only on what we accomplish, but on our willingness to allow God to work through us.

Sheen's missionary commitment was also expressed through his extraordinary generosity and concern for the poor. As National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, he helped raise millions of dollars to support the Church in some of the poorest parts of the world. He also gave generously from his own earnings as a broadcaster, writer and speaker. For Sheen, supporting the missions was not simply about providing financial assistance. It was an expression of solidarity with fellow Christians and a recognition that, as members of one Church, we share responsibility for one another. The needs of a struggling community on

the other side of the world were as much his concern as those of his own country.

One of Sheen's enduring contributions to the missionary life of the Church was the World Mission Rosary, which he introduced in 1951. Its five colours represent the different continents of the world, reminding us that the Church is a worldwide family united in faith and prayer. Through this simple devotion, Sheen encouraged Catholics to look beyond the needs of their own parishes and communities and to recognise their responsibility for the Church's mission throughout the world. It was a practical expression of something he believed deeply - that mission belongs to the whole Church, and that every Catholic, wherever they live, has a part to play.

The timing of Sheen's beatification is particularly significant as the Church celebrates the centenary of World Mission Sunday on 18 October 2026. Established by Pope Pius XI in 1926, World Mission Sunday reminds Catholics everywhere that the proclamation of the Gospel is a responsibility shared by the whole Church. This year's theme, One in Christ, United in Mission, captures much of what Sheen devoted his life to promoting. Our unity in Christ calls us to look beyond the boundaries of our own parishes, dioceses and countries, recognising that we belong to a worldwide family of faith, with a shared responsibility to support one another in prayer, solidarity and practical assistance.

Blessed Fulton Sheen's life challenges us to recognise that each of us has something to offer. Whether through prayer, sharing our faith, supporting missionary work or reaching out to those in need, we can all participate in Christ's mission. A catechist sharing the faith with children, a parishioner visiting someone who is lonely, a family praying for missionaries, or a community contributing to the World Mission Sunday collection is participating in the same mission that inspired Fulton Sheen.

As we celebrate the centenary of World Mission Sunday, Blessed Fulton Sheen's life reminds us that mission is not measured by how much attention we attract or how much recognition we receive, but by how faithfully we respond to Christ's call. Few of us will ever reach millions of people as Sheen did, but each of us can make Christ known through the way we live, the love we share and the faith we put into action. The real challenge of his beatification is not simply to admire what God accomplished through him, but to ask ourselves what we are allowing God to accomplish through us.

# Sr Mary Teresa Barron Appointed President of the Pontifical Mission Societies

On 8 October 2026, Pope Leo XIV announced the appointment of Sister Mary Teresa Barron, OLA, as President of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) and Adjunct Secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelization. She will officially assume her responsibilities on 4 January 2027.

Her appointment is historic, marking the first time a woman has been entrusted with the leadership of the Pontifical Mission Societies. It also places an experienced missionary at the heart of the Church's worldwide mission of evangelisation.

Born on 7 November 1968 in County Donegal, Ireland, Sister Mary Teresa joined the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles in 1992. Her congregation has a long history of missionary service, particularly in Africa, with a strong commitment to education, healthcare, evangelisation and the promotion of human dignity.

Her missionary experience includes service in Nigeria and Tanzania, where she was involved in pastoral ministry, initiatives supporting women, and HIV/AIDS-related programmes. These experiences have given her a practical understanding of the challenges facing local Churches, particularly those experiencing poverty and marginalisation.

Sister Mary Teresa holds master's degrees in Public Healthcare Administration and International Development. Since 2018, she has served as Superior General of her congregation. She was also President of the Service of Documentation and Study on Global Mission (SEDOS) from 2022 to 2025, and President of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) from 2023 to 2025.

Reflecting on the historic significance of her appointment, Sister Mary Teresa acknowledged the countless women whose lives and witness have shaped the missionary life of the Church. "As the first woman to be entrusted with this responsibility, I receive this honour with humility and with a profound



awareness that it is larger than myself. I see it as a recognition of the countless women, Religious and lay, who have dedicated their lives to proclaiming the Gospel and serving God's people in every corner of the world."

She also paid tribute to the missionary legacy of her own congregation, which celebrates 150 years of service this year, particularly in Africa. "Thousands of OLAs have gone before me, paving the way for our missionary engagement from one generation to the next. I honour all of them by accepting this role."

Her years of missionary service in Africa have given Sister Mary Teresa firsthand experience of the opportunities and challenges facing local Churches. She sees this experience as an important part of what she brings to her new responsibilities. As she explained: "I am especially grateful that the Holy Father has recognised the value of missionary experience in this role. Missionaries live close to the realities, hopes, and challenges of local churches, and I hope to bring that perspective to the service of the Pontifical Mission Societies."

Her appointment comes as the Church celebrates the centenary of World Mission Sunday on 18 October 2026, under the theme One in Christ, United in Mission.

As Sister Mary Teresa prepares to assume her new responsibilities, we offer her our congratulations and prayers. May her leadership strengthen the missionary spirit of the Church and remind us that mission is not simply something we support, but a calling we are all invited to live.

# ONE IN CHRIST UNITED IN *Mission*

100 YEARS  
OF WORLD MISSION SUNDAY



THE  
PONTIFICAL  
MISSION  
SOCIETIES

100 YEARS  
OF PRAYER,  
SOLIDARITY  
& MISSION



## WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2026 SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER 2026

Every year, the Pope invites us to pray and help our brothers and sisters around the world. We are all part of God's family, called to **love, share and bring hope to others.**

“

*There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as you were called to the one hope of  
your calling; one Lord, one faith,  
one baptism; one God and Father of all...*

**Ephesians 4:4-6**

”

*Be a Missionary of Hope!*



**PRAY**

Pray for all people  
and for the mission  
of the Church  
around the world.



**LEARN**

Learn about the  
missions and share  
the joy of being  
Catholic.



**SHARE**

Share God's love  
and be kind to  
everyone.



**GO**

Go out and make  
a difference in  
your family,  
school and parish.

### WORLD MISSION SUNDAY IS:



#### ABOUT SOLIDARITY

Every Catholic community  
in the world stands together  
to support the Church  
where it is new, young  
or poor.



#### A UNIVERSAL FUND

Your prayers and donations  
support missionaries, local  
churches, schools, hospitals  
and vocations in more than  
1,100 mission dioceses.



#### MORE THAN COLLECTIONS

It is about prayer, formation  
and charity – joining in the  
mission of the Church every  
day of our lives.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

Your donation helps bring hope  
and supports the Church where  
it is needed most.



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#### National Director

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**South Africa, Botswana, eSwatini**



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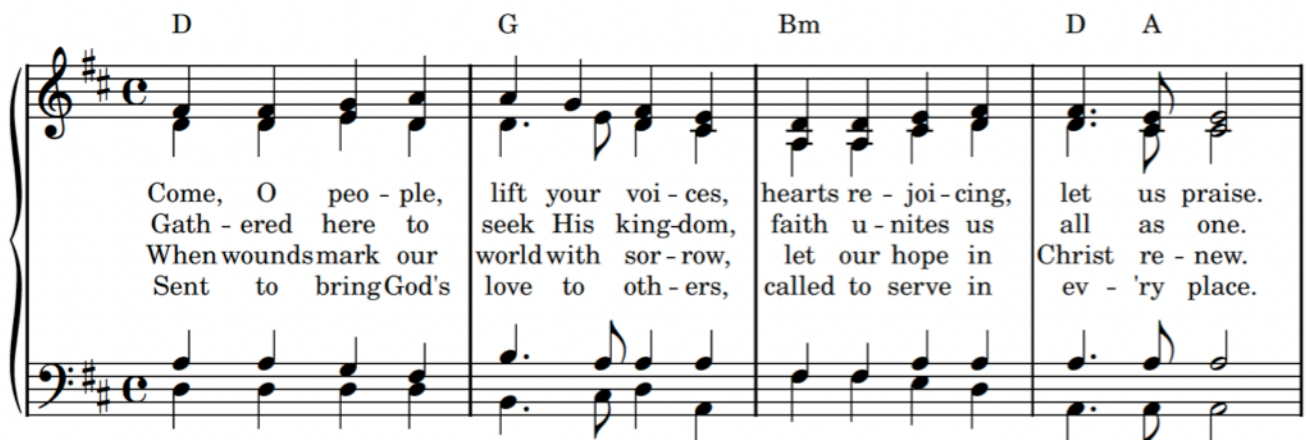
# One in Christ, United in Mission

Missionary Hymn 2026

Words: Fr Jeremiah Browne

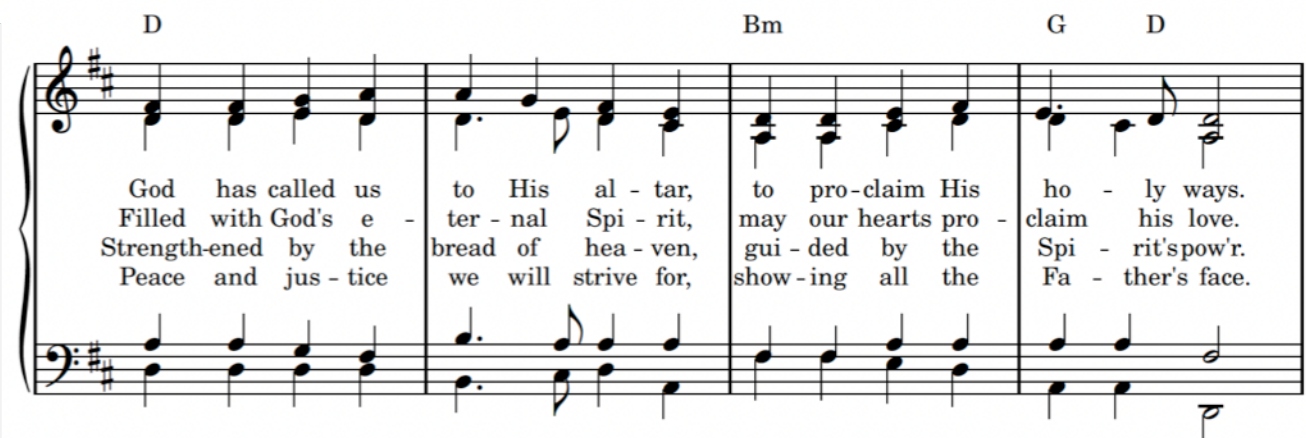
Music: Beethoven

D G Bm D A



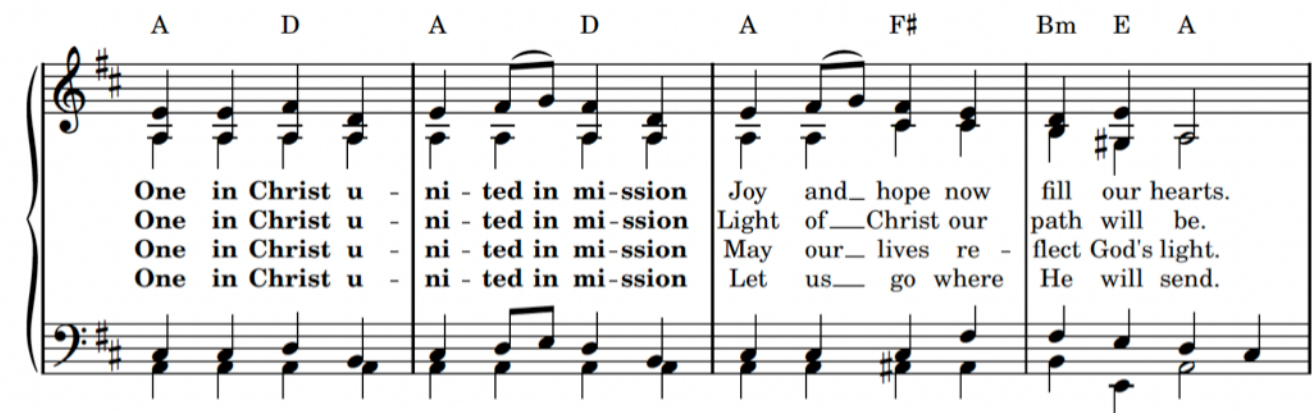
Come, O peo - ple, lift your voi - ces, hearts re - joi - cing, let us praise.  
Gath - ered here to seek His king - dom, faith u - nites us all as one.  
When wounds mark our world with sor - row, let our hope in Christ re - new.  
Sent to bring God's love to oth - ers, called to serve in ev - 'ry place.

D Bm G D



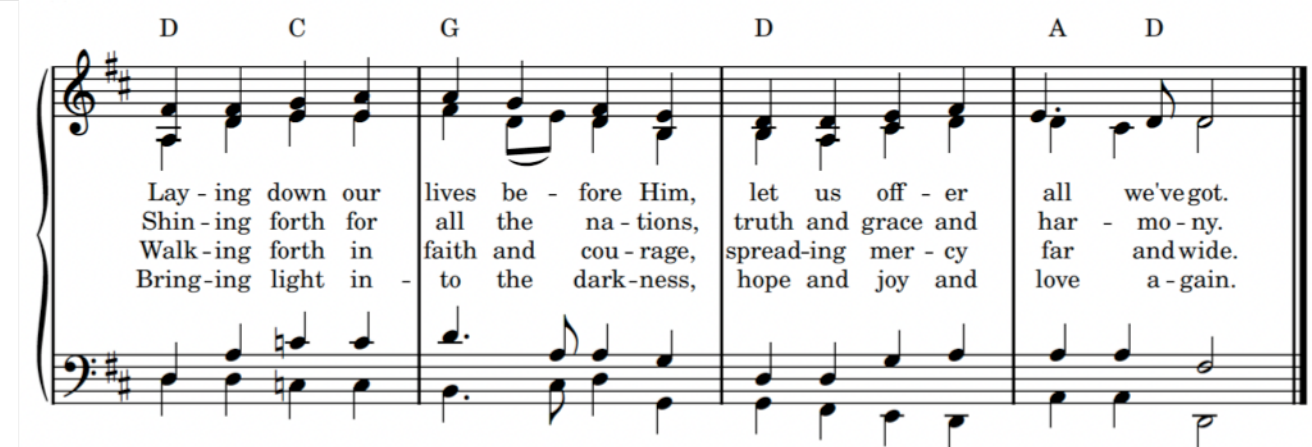
God has called us to His al - tar, to pro - claim His ho - ly ways.  
Filled with God's e - ter - nal Spi - rit, may our hearts pro - claim his love.  
Strength - ened by the bread of hea - ven, gui - ded by the Spi - rit's pow'r.  
Peace and jus - tice we will strive for, show - ing all the Fa - ther's face.

A D A D A F# Bm E A



One in Christ u - ni - ted in mi - ssion Joy and hope now fill our hearts.  
One in Christ u - ni - ted in mi - ssion Light of Christ our path will be.  
One in Christ u - ni - ted in mi - ssion May our lives re - flect God's light.  
One in Christ u - ni - ted in mi - ssion Let us go where He will send.

D C G D A D



Lay - ing down our lives be - fore Him, let us off - er all we've got.  
Shin - ing forth for all the na - tions, truth and grace and har - mo - ny.  
Walk - ing forth in faith and cou - rage, spread - ing mer - cy far and wide.  
Bring - ing light in - to the dark - ness, hope and joy and love a - gain.



# Pontifical *Mission* Societies 2026

*Loving God*

send us out as joyful missionary disciples,

**One in Christ, united in mission.**

Renew our passion and love for  
the Gospel and for one another,  
so that the world may know  
Your saving love.

*Amen*

South Africa  
Botswana,  
eSwatini



## Contact Details

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