



Catholic Diocese of Victoria
Office of the Bishop

1-4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria, BC V8X 2A1 - Tel: 250-479-1331 - Fax: 250-479-5423 - Web: rcdvictoria.org

September 19, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are Baptized and Sent - We are the Church of Christ on Mission in the World!

It is with great joy that we welcome the *Extraordinary Month of Mission* that the Universal Church is calling us to celebrate this October 2019.

In 1919, Pope Benedict XV, also known as the Missionary Pope, wrote the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* that invited us to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. This year is the 100th Anniversary of that Letter and it still remains relevant to us today as our wounded world needs the love and justice of Jesus Christ. For this reason, Pope Francis has set aside October 2019 as the *Extraordinary Missionary Month*.

As Baptized Catholics we are the Church, the Church of Christ. We have the privilege and duty to respond to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to "go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). In the words of the Second Vatican Council, this is Her "essential task," for the Church is "missionary by nature" (*Ad Gentes*). During this *Extraordinary Missionary Month* of October, we are invited by Pope Francis to be more authentic missionary disciples by focusing on four dimensions in our Christian life:

1. Be open to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in His Church through the Eucharist, the Word of God, and through personal and communal prayer;
2. Be inspired and imitate the witness and testimony of missionary saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith who are expressions of the Church scattered throughout the world;
3. Be diligent in Missionary Formation through biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological study;
4. Be engaged in Missionary Charity through corporal works of mercy, almsgiving, and restorative justice.

Together as individuals and as communities, it is my hope and prayer that all of us will take up the challenge of Pope Francis and grow more deeply as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, to bring His healing and transforming message to our families, neighbourhoods, to all of Vancouver Island, and indeed to the ends of the earth.

We are Baptized and Sent - We are the Church of Christ on Mission in the World.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria