

The tools of the direct mission

Pilgrim friends,

Earlier we talked about the mission in our daily lives, the witness of faith in our family, our workplace, etc. The Christian, baptized and confirmed, is always on mission, sent by Christ.

But there are also more organized types of missions. If the apostles had been content with an informal evangelization according to the circumstances, where would we be? At times,

We must take the lead: this is the **direct mission**. The purpose of this guidebook is

To give you some ideas, advice and concrete warnings to best deploy your missionary vocation in the world.

First of all, be aware that there are different types of missions, for all tastes and characters! The tradition of the Church sums them up in the 14 works of mercy: some concern charity, others aim more directly at the proclamation of the truth.

Missionary through service and charity

One day some students came to Blessed Frederick Ozanam and said to him: "*Christianity in the past has done wonders; But today, where are the works?*" So the latter brought together young people, to reach out to the poor: **this was the birth of the "Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul"**, small teams that went to visit the most disadvantaged. The idea is to act against material misery, to act against spiritual misery: well aware that **the greatest poverty is the ignorance of the Saviour**. It is the practice **of corporal works of mercy**, a formidable missionary tool, as we saw with Saint Francis de Sales.



Today, these **Saint-Vincent de Paul conferences still exist**, but they lack young volunteers! There are also street patrols , the possibility of visiting hospitals or nursing homes, prison chaplaincies... It is possible to get involved either permanently or occasionally, for example by going to sing in a retirement home ...

One can either join a work that already exists (see the services concerned with charity listed by the dioceses), or found something, in connection with one's parish or community!

Missionary in his community or parish

Since the Mass is a sun, the church and the parish community must be the place of radiance par excellence. Even more so with the influx of newcomers, converts, new starters, more and more numerous. These people have high expectations, they must be welcomed. And it is particularly difficult to integrate a parish community. Here are some ideas:

- **Be attentive to newcomers.** To be able to say " *hello* " or " *welcome* " to a person who is coming for the first time or who is discovering; to show him the missals to follow, to offer to guide him during Mass if he needs it. Be especially careful of our attitude in the forecourt, at the end of Mass: if we speak only with our friends, in a worldly way, we are terribly failing in the call of mission, which is all the more necessary as we have just received communion: the Eucharist urges us to the mission! What if we made the resolution, at the end of each Mass, to talk for at least 5 minutes to people we don't know?

- **Organize specific events** related to your community: for example, aperitifs or meals, open to all, especially single people.

- **Create special groups** in connection with your pastor within the community, with various faithful, and some neophytes or catechumens. These groups make it easier to integrate newcomers, who are sometimes impressed by the size of the parishes, and to offer activities. Here, a thousand ideas exist! These groups can meet for manual activities (rebuilding calvaries with the cells

SOS Calvaires for example), cultural, intellectual, discussions, times of prayer, marauding... and missionary activities!

Idea

If each chapter of the pilgrimage decided to continue a monthly spiritual, intellectual and missionary activity, open to "new beginnings" and converts, what an impetus it would be, everywhere in France!

Missionary by attraction to God

When we think of mission, we think first of "*going to*" people, where they are. We will talk about this later; but there is also an alternative, perhaps more accessible at first: **"attracting people" to the Good Lord, especially through beauty**. It consists of creating an event, in connection with the priest of his community, open to all, around a point of attraction (often: the church), for example by taking advantage of a particular time of the year (Christmas, Easter, All Saints' Day, Heritage Days...), with the aim of astonishing, teaching, making passers-by wonder, and engaging in conversations: for example, a procession, a street concert in front of the forecourt, the opening and the organized visit of the church by volunteers, the welcome on the forecourt, the discovery of the nativity scene, living nativity scenes around Christmas, adoration...

The idea is to take advantage of these special events to be actively missionary, to explain who we are, to talk about Christ... As people are in a process of questioning and curiosity, it is much easier to talk about Christ.

It is important to leave a "wake": offer an object, a candle, or a leaflet, propose a later appointment, etc. **In this regard, the pilgrimage will give you a tool: a simple leaflet that summarises the main elements of the faith, with a prayer, and good addresses to go further** : always have them with you, distribute them abundantly!

Idea

If each chapter of the pilgrimage decided to organize a missionary event during the year around its church, what a boost it would be, everywhere in France!

The beauty of our churches has a power of evangelization. A certain Rod Dreher, author of several books, recounts his conversion: "*I was a*

As a 17-year-old agnostic tourist, I stumbled into Chartres Cathedral, and was overwhelmed with wonder. I knew, suddenly, that God existed and that He wanted me. »

A particular conviction animates us on the pilgrimage : we are convinced of **the missionary power of the Tridentine liturgy** : it is missionary in its most visible aspects: the attraction for beauty, Gregorian, polyphony, ornaments, the atmosphere of prayer... It is so above all because it makes visible the adoration due to God, through silence, genuflections, respect for the Eucharist... and thus it excellently expresses the Catholic theology of the Mass, the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice that Christ offered to his Father on Good Friday. Finally, it is so because those who succeed¹ also come because they have found there the solid support they needed: catechism, sermons, all that we call in our manifesto the "traditional pedagogies of the faith": *lex orandi, lex credendi* !

You have to know how to take advantage of it, use it for the mission, and above all explain it to people! As such, there is an excellent series of explanations on the Tridentine liturgy: "The Mass, treasure of faith".

The Mass, treasure of faith

Cycle of videos to watch on claves.org or YouTube channel



Another way to be a missionary by attraction is to offer people (friends, encounters) the opportunity to participate in organized activities (coming to the pilgrimage, discovering an abbey, etc.)

Dare to take on a street mission?

Street mission, or home visits to talk to people about Christ directly can be frightening: going into the unknown to talk to him about something very intimate... We can have the impression of disturbing, of forcing... **However, let us always remember that the reason for evangelizing is the sense of urgency** : without Christ, men and women are lost! There is a duty of charity here. Knowing Jesus is no small

"More" to improve the planet: it's a question of salvation! These types of direct missionary activity are practiced, in particular, by the young people of the MJCF (Mouvement de la Jeunesse Catholique de France), founded in 1970: many people today can testify to having

1. See: *They entered the Church through the Latin liturgy*, testimonies collected by Philippe Pélissier, Presses de la Délivrance, 2025.

rediscovered the faith by meeting, in the street, members of the MJCF who dared to talk to them about Christ. Today, this movement is perpetuated in some of our chapters, such as the chapter of Saint Magdalene, Saint Lazarus, Missio, etc., and there is also the chapter of the pilgrims of Emmaus who do street evangelization during the pilgrimage to passers-by, taking advantage of the astonishment aroused by the column to proclaim the Gospel.

The equipment of the street mission is that which was described in the previous meditation. Let's just insist on a few specific points:

- Always go in pairs. In the Gospel, " *he sent them out two by two* " (Lk 10:1). One speaks, and the other prays.

- The chapters of evangelization of the pilgrimage have as their patrons the Pilgrims of Emmaus, to go about it like Jesus with the two disciples of Emmaus. First Jesus listens. It begins with a question: "*What were you discussing?*" (Lk 24:17). So ask questions; if possible open-ended questions (the answer to which is not just yes or no):

" *What does this place, this church, these songs make you think of? Where do you stand from the point of view of faith, on a scale of 1 to 10?* »

- **The flag** : this is the essential message. Jesus said, " *Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer this in order to enter into his glory ?* " (Lk 24:26). For us the goal is to announce the central truth either in the form of an affirmation or in the form of an experience.

Mission auxiliaries

Let us be well aware that there are many ways to participate in evangelization. To take the example of the street mission, those who do not directly approach people can get involved in adoration, material preparation, decoration. To be an "auxiliary of the mission" is already to be a missionary! More generally, mission can also involve teaching, education, intellectual formation, commitment to the service of Christ the King, all of which we have studied in the 2025 edition of the pilgrimage.

Missionary on the Internet?

The Internet is a real field of apostolate. For many people, perhaps even in this chapter, the first contact with the Gospel and Catholic doctrine was made on the networks, or through a video, or

by a site. The Church has always known how to use the media proper to each age to speak of Christ. Saint Carlo Acutis understood this well!

But we must also be aware of the pitfalls that this type of apostolate can entail. So, here are some tips:

- Not to expose **one's own ideas, but the Gospel**. Always check that our words correspond to the teaching of the Church; and for this we must be trained, especially on the Magisterium, and have its content checked by someone competent.

- **Not to be alone**. Most of those who do the apostolate on the internet are supported; even if in the end, you can only see one face on the video, there is often a whole team behind it that has worked.

- To be advised **by a priest**, to submit our content or difficult questions to him.

- **Not to speak of oneself, but of Christ**. We know how much social media pushes people to " *tell their lives* ": but here, the goal is not to be loved and admired, it is to proclaim Jesus Christ. You regularly have to ask yourself the question: do I post content to evangelize, or to feel like I exist?

- Always aim for **the real world as a goal**. The international missionary does not fulfill his mission if he does not try to direct the person to parish life, to a priest, to the sacraments. Jesus does not save through videos, podcasts or emails. He saves through the sacraments and through the Church!

Fellow pilgrims, each of us must now reflect: **what will be my missionary activity after the pilgrimage?** What is the Lord calling me to be His disciple? Of course, the mission requires us to go beyond our human respect, to get out of our comfort zone; But be sure of one thing, to which all missionaries testify: evangelization brings immense joy. And it profoundly strengthens the faith. "*Faith is established when it is given.*" Finally, whatever you choose, remember the only rule in this area: "*It is not permitted for anyone to stand by and do nothing*"³.

2. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 2.

3. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (December 30, 1988).

Quotes

A single mission would not be enough for me, I would at the same time like to proclaim the Gospel in the five parts of the world and even in the most remote islands... I would like to be a missionary not only for a few years, but I would like to have been one from the creation of the world to the consummation of the centuries.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, *Autobiographical Manuscripts*

When, therefore, the risen Jesus says to his Apostles, "Go and teach all nations," he sufficiently indicates that the word must ring in the ears, that it will make its noise in the world, a noise that will be heard by those who yield to this word, as well as by those who despise it. Does this word have the right to circulate freely in this way, without asking permission from the powers of the earth? Who would dare deny that she has this right? The Son of God said, "Go and teach all nations"; it must be obeyed; and the word of God entrusted to his envoys cannot be chained.

Dom Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year*, the Thursday in the Third Week After Easter



Anonymous fresco depicting the sending of the apostles on mission by Christ

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