The Mission of the Laity
That the lay faithful may fulfill their specific mission by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

This month, we are each asked to consider our own vocation and how we share our specific gifts to serve God's mission in our lives and in our world.

CENTER for MISSION
Society for the Propagation of the Faith / St. Paul and Minneapolis

Mission Intention

MAY 2017 - 2018

Country Focus: Tanzania

Tanzania is located in East Africa and is well known for its beautiful jungles, mountains, lakes and wildlife. Tanzania was a British colony until 1964 when it achieved independence. There are more than 130 tribes with different languages spoken, but the national language is Swahili which spoken by most people.

Christian missionaries landed in Tanzania in 1499, but serious evangelization did not occur until 1868 when several missionary groups arrived and ministered to freed slaves. These slaves became the first catechists leading missionaries into other parts of the country.

The catechists were lay leaders playing a major role in evangelizing the country of Tanzania. During times of war, they were prominent in sustaining Christian faith.

The Church introduced a system of Small Christian Communities as a way of building and growing Church life. Today, this has lead to laity becoming more involved in their Church and ministry.

Promoting Knowledge of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"There are different gifts, but the same spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different works, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit" (I Cor. 12:4-7).

"(The Lord) is inviting all the laity to unite themselves to him...and to join in his mission. ...It is the Lord who is again sending them to every town and every place where he himself is to come" (Vatican II: Decree on the Laity).

Education for Community Life

A Saint for Mission: St. Vincent Pallotti

Vincent Pallotti was born in Rome in 1795, the third of ten children. He grew up in a home that prayed, worshiped and served together as a family. Early in life, Vincent developed a great desire to serve the poor because he believed deeply that loving those in need was the same as loving Christ. He became very involved with ministering to youth and young adults as a seminarian and as a priest. His ministry led him to serve and encourage farmers, young workers, students in school and troubled youth. Pallotti also ministered to the wealthy and leaders of society so they would live virtuous lives treating their workers and those on the margins of society with respect and dignity.

Fr. Vincent eventually formed the Union of the Catholic Apostolate which strived to accomplish a revival of the Catholic faith among Catholics and a rekindling of charity and service to the poor. His ministry expanded to serve the sick, prisoners, soldiers and troubled youth. He desired that people of every background and way of life live and work together to serve God's people in need. Fr. Vincent dedicated his vocation and ministry to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. His movement has grown today to number thousands of priests, brothers, sisters and a vast number of lay people serving around the world.

St. Vincent died in 1850 and was canonized a saint in 1963 by Pope John XXIII as a model for all active priests and for encouraging laity to become more active in the mission of the Church. His life and ministry was an inspiration to movements like Catholic Action and the Second Vatican Council.

Stewardship of Creation

Luca Berardi with students at YARH workshop, Kenya.

In the Catholic Church teachings, we are urged to respect our Earth's environment as good stewards of all that God has created. In fact, it is our moral duty to protect our planet and all the people, animals, plants and natural resources that we share. We can all do this, for instance, by conserving water, recycling and composting waste and speaking out publicly to educate others about wise conservation practices.

We all are stewards of God's creation.

Luca Berardi lives in Tanzania and has been speaking out about the importance and ways of protecting the environment since he was eight years old. He was only eight when he also set up a wildlife organization, YARH, in Nairobi, Kenya.

His audience has been mainly children who Luca sees as future leaders who can work to protect animals from poaching, save trees and reduce the amount of plastics littering the land. He uses art as a way to educate his fellow students and get them to think about how they can help.

Although one of his challenges is to be taken seriously by adults, that hasn't stopped Luca who is passionate about what he does.

Watch the inspiring story of Luca Berardi: Teenager Inspires Many Children to Protect the Environment

Luca Berardi in Tanzania: Stewardship of Creation

1. When educating his peers about the environment, why do you think Luca uses art to teach about protecting animals, plants and natural resources? What gifts/talents do you have to influence others about the environment?
2. What is one of Luca's major challenges and how does he overcome it?
3. Why is this story about Luca Berardi so important for students in the U.S. and the role they can play helping to save our planet?
4. How might you and your classmates determine an important environmental issue and work for change?

Howtoconserve.org

Mission Petitions

✠ Let us pray for all lay people in the Church that each one of us will fulfill our specific mission in the world.

✠ Let us pray for all those preparing to commit themselves to the vocation of marriage, priesthood, and religious life.

✠ Let us pray for a deeper reverence for all life and caring for the gifts of creation that God has given to us.

✠ Let us pray that each of us will discover and share the gifts we have for building up the Kingdom of God in our time.

Dear Lord,
You have called me by name and have given me your Spirit for the sake of sharing in your mission to the world. Help me to share my gifts wherever you lead me in my life and know that you are always with me. In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen