

Mission Intention

DECEMBER

2020 - 2021

Education for
Community Life

Country Focus: Sweden

Pope Francis' December Prayer Intention

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be fed by Scripture and a life of prayer.

With a population of about 10 million in a country about the size of California, Sweden is many things: it is considered one of the world's most highly developed societies and its citizens enjoy some of the highest standards of living and longest life expectancies in the world.

But Sweden is also one of the least religious countries in the world. According to recent surveys by WIN/Gallup International, less than one in five Swedes claim to be religious and the number of Swedes who attend religious services regularly is declining. More Swedes are also using secular celebrations to mark life occasions that used to be celebrated religiously. For example, more Swedes are choosing civil wedding ceremonies rather than religious celebrations, and "name giving" ceremonies for infants instead of baptisms.

Despite this, the Catholic Church is growing in Sweden. Although Catholics are a minority in Sweden, the Catholic Church and some Eastern Rite churches are experiencing an increase in membership due to the number of migrants and refugees settling in the country. Let us pray that the Church in Sweden and all who seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ may find strength in Scripture and prayer and their faith may continue to thrive.



Saint Spotlight: Blessed Columba Marmion



Blessed Columba Marmion dedicated his life to helping others grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Born Joseph Marmion, in Dublin, Ireland, in 1858, he felt an early call to lead a life as a missionary monk in Australia. However, God had somewhat different plans for his life. After being ordained a priest of the Dublin Archdiocese in 1881, he spent the first five years of his ministry in that archdiocese. Then, in 1886, he was allowed to enter Maredsous Abbey in Belgium, and in 1891 made his solemn profession, fulfilling his call to monastic life and taking the name of Columba. He was elected the abbot of Maredsous Abbey in 1909, a position he held for the rest of his life.

During his time as abbot of Maredsous Abbey, Blessed Columba Marmion continued his work providing spiritual direction and retreats, and wrote three books: *Christ, the Life of the Soul*; *Christ in his Mysteries*; and *Christ the Ideal of the Monk*. His commitment to growing ever closer to Christ serves as an example to us to always continue to strengthen our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Blessed Columba Marmion died in 1923 during a flu epidemic. After a miracle attributed to him in which he cured a St. Cloud, MN woman suffering from cancer, Blessed Columba Marmion was beatified in 2000. His feast day is October 3.



CENTER for MISSION

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

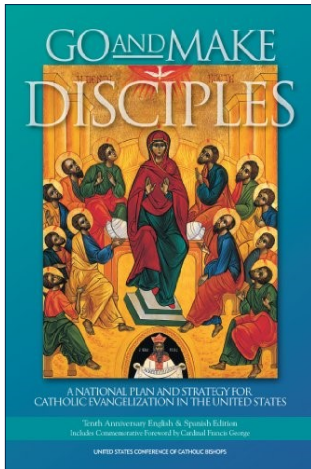
Promoting Knowledge
of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

"Service, when understood as serving Christ in others and as a means to share the Gospel, has the ability to bring the server and the one being served closer to Christ" (USCCB, "Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization").

The New Evangelization



What does the word “evangelization” mean to you? All Catholics are called to share the Gospel message with others. The New Evangelization teaches that we must continue growing in our own faith and knowledge of the Gospel so that we may be good witnesses of Christ to all those we meet. Strengthening our faith helps us be better disciples in our daily lives, and this is one way we can share the Gospel with others. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) teach us in *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, “...we must let our faith shine on the world around us, radiating the love of Jesus by the everyday way we speak, think, and act” (no. 17).

We also share the Gospel when we live God’s love. In *The New Evangelization: Disciples on*

Mission in the World, the USCCB says, “Evangelization always includes loving our neighbor and working to uphold his or her dignity.” Donating items to a food or homeless shelter, volunteering your time at Feed My Starving Children or other charity organizations, or visiting someone in a nursing home are all ways you can share the Gospel message of Christ.

In this month’s video, we will meet 7-year-old Cavanaugh from Maryland and learn how he started his own charity to make care packs for senior citizens. As you watch the video, think about how God might be calling you to be an example of the Gospel message in your own community. How is God giving you opportunities to live His love in your daily life? With whom do you think he is calling you to share the good news of the Gospel, either in word or by your actions?

Boy Spends Savings for Elderly- [Click Here>>](#)

1. Name two acts of kindness that would be easy for you to accomplish every day.
2. Why is it important for us to strengthen our own faith in order to share the Gospel?
3. Name two ways you can grow in faith so that you can continue to be a good witness of Christ.
4. Why does the Church teach that evangelization includes more than words?



Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray that we may follow the example of Blessed Columba Marmion and always seek to grow in our faith.
- ✚ Let us pray for the wisdom to live according to our faith so that we may bear witness of Christ to others.
- ✚ Let us pray for those whose faith lacks strength, that they may come to know the joy of the Gospel.
- ✚ Let us pray that the Church may be an instrument of God’s peace and justice in the world.

Dear God,
Thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Help me always to grow in my faith and to deepen my relationship with Jesus so that I may live the Good News in my daily life through words and actions. Amen.