

Mission Intention

MARCH

2020 - 2021

Education for
Community Life

Country Focus: The Amazon

Pope Francis' March Prayer Intention

Let us pray that we may experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation with renewed understanding, to encounter the endless mercy of God.

Twice the size of India, the Amazon is the largest forest on Earth. In addition to its famous rainforest, the Amazon region, known as the Amazon Biome, also includes savannas, grasslands and swamps. One in 10 known species live in the Biome, and it generates one-fifth of the world's freshwater. It is also home to more than 30 million people who live in eight different countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. Of these 30 million people, about three million are indigenous.

The Catholic Church has had a presence in the Amazon Biome for more than 400 years, providing for the region's poor, and more recently working to protect the Biome from misuse by landowners and businesses. The Church is also working to make it easier for the faithful to

worship. Many areas in the Amazon are hard to get to, and many different languages are spoken, which can make it difficult for the Church to regularly celebrate the Mass and sacraments.

In 2019, Pope Francis convened the Extraordinary Synod on the Amazon, to help address some of these challenges. Let us pray for the continued protection of the Amazon and its peoples, and for the faithful in this region, that they may be able to regularly celebrate Mass and the sacraments.



Promoting Knowledge
of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"So [Jesus] told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.'" (Luke 15:3-7)

Saint Spotlight: Saint Mary Magdalene



After Jesus' Resurrection, he appeared to the Apostles and asked them to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout the world. But while the Apostles witnessed Jesus after he had risen, they weren't the first people to learn of his Resurrection. That honor went to another disciple: Saint Mary Magdalene.

In all four Gospels, Saint Mary Magdalene is identified as being one of the first people to learn about Jesus' Resurrection. In the Gospel of John, she is alone when she first hears this news. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, she is one of a small group of women who are the first to find Jesus' tomb empty. As the first, or one of the first, witnesses to the Resurrection, she had the privilege of being among the first to share the Good News with the rest of the disciples. This is why she is considered the "Apostle to the Apostles."

For many centuries, Saint Mary Magdalene was considered the unnamed sinful woman we read about in Luke 7:35-50. But today, many scholars believe this is a case of mistaken identity, and that she and the unnamed sinful woman were two different people. In Luke 8:2-3, we learn that Jesus cured Saint Mary Magdalene of seven demons. She was one of many women who accompanied Jesus and the Apostles as they traveled to cities and villages to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and used her own resources to help fund Jesus' ministry.

Saint Mary Magdalene is an example of generosity and is known for her sincere sorrow of sin. She is the patron saint of penitents. We remember her each year on her feast day, July 22.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation



We all make mistakes. Sometimes, these mistakes are unintentional. But other times, we choose to make bad decisions, like cheating on a test, disobeying our parents, or being too afraid to do what we know we should. The Church teaches that when we choose to do the wrong thing, or avoid doing the right thing, we sin. When we sin, we hurt our relationship with God and the Church, and should seek forgiveness.

God gives us a path to forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we receive God's gift of forgiveness made possible through the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. By being truly sorry for and acknowledging our sins, working to repair the harm done by our actions, and changing our behavior so that we avoid future sin, we are able to receive God's healing grace and are reconciled

to God and the Church. We are also reminded of the importance of showing compassion and forgiveness toward those who sin against us.

We all need God's help in resisting temptation and overcoming sin, but sometimes it can be intimidating to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. It is important to remember that this sacrament is a source of joy and not something we should fear. As Pope Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), "Whenever we take a step toward Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: 'Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you...' How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost!...God never tires of forgiving us..." (no. 3).

Why Confess Your Sins... [Click Here >>](#)

1. Why do Catholics confess our sins to a priest?
2. Why is it important to show compassion and forgiveness to those who have sinned against us?
3. What questions might you have about the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?
4. Why is it important to be truly sorry for our sins before receiving the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?



Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray for an increase in vocations, so those living in remote locations might have greater opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- ✚ Let us pray that we may grow closer to God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- ✚ Let us pray for the grace and willingness to forgive those who have wronged us.
- ✚ Let us pray for those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising again, that they will see God.

My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.