

MISSION INTENTIONS

OCT

2021 - 2022

We pray that every baptized person may join in the mission of evangelization, by living a life that is an example of the Gospel.

Country Focus: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Already home to the largest Catholic population in Africa, the Roman Catholic Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the DRC) is expected to double in size by 2050. Although its history is intertwined with colonialism, the Catholic Church is now widely seen as one of the most trusted institutions in the DRC. A leader in providing social services and advocating for democracy, the Church operates schools, hospitals and development projects, sharing the love of the Gospel through its acts of charity and justice.



Recently, the Church in the DRC has experienced some struggles: a move toward free basic education is affecting Catholic schools. Attacks against the Church and its leaders, thought to be politically motivated, have also occurred. Let us keep the Church in the DRC in our prayers, that they may continue to share the love of Christ with all Congolese people.

Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

Evangelization is more than sharing the Gospel with words. Another necessary part of evangelization is living our daily lives according to the Gospel. In their 2002 document, “Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirm this, writing:

“...there are familiar ways by which evangelization happens: by the way we live God’s love in our daily life;...in the care we show to those most in need; and in the ways we go about our work, share with our neighbors, and treat the stranger.” (no. 35)

Saint Spotlight

It can be difficult to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” as Jesus commands us in Matthew 5:44, but Blessed Isidore Bakanja shows us that this is possible for those who love and follow Jesus.

Isidore Bakanja was born in the late 1800’s in what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but was then the Belgian Congo. He was working as a bricklayer when he first met the Trappist missionaries from Belgium who would introduce him to Christ. He was baptized at 18, and spent the rest of his life sharing the Gospel message through his words and actions. He often carried a rosary, always wore a scapular, prayed faithfully, and talked about his faith with anyone willing to listen.



Blessed Isidore Bakanja

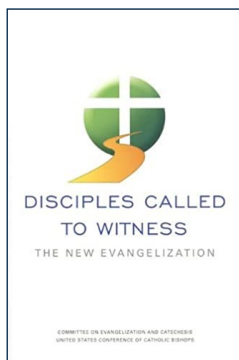
Eventually, Isidore decided to move to a larger city where there would be more Catholics. He found a job with a Belgian company, but soon realized this was a mistake. Many of his supervisors did not like Catholics or native Congolese people. His bosses told him to stop sharing his faith with his co-workers, and to remove his scapular. Isidore refused, and was flogged so severely he died from his injuries six months later.

As he received Last Rites, he said he had already forgiven his attacker and would pray for him when he was in heaven. Isidore is an example to us all of what it means to evangelize by living life according to the Gospel. Isidore was beatified on April 24, 1994.

Formation for Life in Christ

In this month's prayer petition, Pope Francis asks us to share the Gospel by living our lives according to its teachings. The Holy Father's request is a reflection of the Church's dedication to the New Evangelization, a teaching inviting all Catholics to deepen their own faith so that we might better share it with others. One of the ways we can do this is through works of charity and justice.

In the document, [Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization](#),



the United States Catholic Bishops write, "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." When we actively engage in works of charity and justice as a response to our faith, we bear witness to Christ in the world and also grow closer to Jesus in our own lives.

The New Evangelization reminds us that both charity and justice are necessary when serving others. Catholics are called to meet the immediate needs of those who are suffering and also to work to change the causes of why that suffering exists.



The relationship between charity and justice is also referred to as the Two

Feet of Love in Action; we need to move both feet of charity and justice to advance the Kingdom of God here on Earth. Volunteering at a homeless shelter and also working to expand access to affordable housing is an example of the Two Feet of Love in Action working together.

In this month's video, we will learn more about the connection between charity and justice. As you watch the video, think about how you can participate in works of charity and justice to share the Gospel in your daily life.

Celebrating the Mystery

In order to be faithful to our call to works of charity and justice we also need to be faithful in our attendance at Mass. It is through the Eucharistic Liturgy that we are strengthened and sent to live the Gospel in the world. As Pope Benedict XVI teaches us in *Sacramentum Caritatis* [Sacrament of Charity], the celebration of the Eucharist should lead us to "a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God's image and likeness" (no. 89).

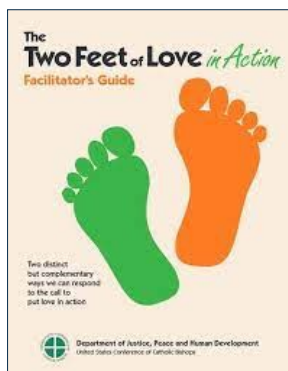
To find Mass times near you, [click here](#)>>

Teaching Prayer:

Lectio Divina is a form of prayer reflecting on the Scriptures. This prayer form involves four steps: reading your selected Scriptures several times; meditating on the text; praying in response to the text; and contemplating God in the text. Try a lectio divina exercise on James 2:14-18 to reflect on works of charity and justice.

Introduction to Community Life

Two Feet of Love in Action: Click Here>>



✚ How do acts of charity and justice help us live our call to be missionary disciples?

✚ Why are both charity and justice necessary to build the Kingdom of God here on Earth?

✚ How have you helped your community through acts of charity and justice?

✚ How has participating in these acts of charity and justice helped you grow in your own faith? In your sense of belonging to the Church?



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