

MISSION INTENTIONS

FEBRUARY 2022-2023

We pray that parishes may increasingly become communities of faith, friendship and welcome towards those most in need, by focusing on building relationships.

Country Focus: Brazil

For centuries, Brazil has been home to more Catholics than any other country in the world. Ever since Portugal colonized Brazil in the 1500's, Catholicism has been the country's most practiced religion. At its height in 1970, about 90 percent of Brazilians considered themselves to be Roman Catholic.

While it is still the country in the world with the most Catholics, today the Church in Brazil is experiencing a decline in Church membership. Like in many other countries around the world, the rise of secularism and the growing popularity of Evangelical churches are some of the reasons people are choosing to leave the Catholic faith. Let us join Pope Francis in prayer this month, that all parishes, and especially those in Brazil, will continue to build relationships with one another and those most in need so they may grow in their witness to the Gospel message.



Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

In order to effectively live this month's prayer intention, we must make Christ the focus of our lives. Another way of stating this is to say we all must become missionary disciples. As Pope Francis said in the Angelus on Sunday, July 15, 2018, *"The missionary disciple has first of all a center, a point of reference, which is the person of Jesus...No Christian proclaims the Gospel 'on his or her own,' but only as one sent by the Church who received the mandate from Christ himself."* We will learn more about missionary discipleship on the second page of this newsletter.

Saint Spotlight

Venerable Odette Vidal de Oliveira

The life of Venerable Odette Vidal de Oliveira, even though short, is an example to us all of how to live out this month's prayer intention.



Odette was born in 1930 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to a very devout family. Her parents' example helped young Odette grow very quickly in her faith, and it is said that from a very young age she was able to speak to Jesus when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Odette was also known to have had a strong devotion to Saint Joseph, and even complained that Jesus' adoptive father did not get the recognition he deserved.

Odette had a profound affect on the lives of those around her. She began taking catechism classes when she was five and learned her lessons so quickly that she helped teach her classmates. She also had a great heart for those with less material resources than her family, sharing her gifts with orphans and arranging for a son of one of her family's employees to receive the sacraments when he fell ill.

Odette died from typhus fever in 1939. Although she was only nine years old at the time of her death, she had already done everything she could to increase the faith of her community and care for those around her.

Venerable Odette Vidal de Oliveira, pray for us!

Formation for Life in Christ

The term “missionary disciple” is frequently used when talking about one’s faith journey. It is common to hear that all Catholics are called to be missionary disciples. But what is a missionary disciple?

A missionary disciple is someone who has had an encounter with Jesus, and, because of that encounter, wants to share Jesus’ love with others. An encounter with Jesus can happen in many different ways: through prayer, the sacraments, acts of service, or when someone bears witness to Christ to you. The Catholic Church believes that this encounter is not meant to be a one-time act of conversion; instead, it should be seen as an invitation to a life of constant conversion, and of growing in faith and knowledge of Christ.

In their document, *Living As Missionary Disciples*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops says that the most effective way to spread the Gospel (to evangelize) is to live a life of faith and charity (pg. 8). This means that the best way to share our faith is to practice it ourselves: by going to Mass regularly, through prayer, celebrating the sacraments, and by living the Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry; giving drink to the thirsty; sheltering the homeless; visiting the sick; visiting prisoners; burying the

dead; and giving alms to the poor. Living a life that is an example of Christ’s love is the best way to evangelize.

In addition to strengthening our own faith, being a missionary disciple means we also work to strengthen our parish communities. The USCCB teaches that since the parish is usually the first place people encounter the Catholic faith, it is the responsibility of the faithful to make sure our parishes are places of welcome where people can encounter Jesus (*Living As Missionary Disciples*, pg. 13). This means using our talents to participate in parish life, like singing in the choir or helping run the sound system at Mass. When we actively participate in our parish communities, we help build up the Church so that it can better live its mission of evangelization.



In this month’s video, we will hear Pope Francis explain what it

means to be a missionary disciple. As you read the Pope’s words in the subtitles, think about how being a missionary disciple helps this month’s prayer intention come alive.

Celebrating the Mystery

All Catholics are called to become missionary disciples at their Baptism. Because we become part of Christ and the Church at Baptism, we also take on the responsibility of their mission: spreading the Gospel throughout the world. As stated in the “Formation for Life in Christ” section of this newsletter, one of the best ways to do this is to live a life of faith and service. Some ways we can do this are by living the Beatitudes, imitating the lives of the saints, working for reconciliation, and by loving God and one another.

When we live according to Jesus’ example, we share the love of Christ with all those we encounter, and fulfill our Baptismal call to be lights in the darkness.

Teaching Prayer: Eucharistic Adoration

One of the best ways we can strengthen our own faith and bear witness to Christ is by spending time in Eucharistic Adoration. When we spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament, we grow in our desire to be in Communion with Christ and His Church. For more information on Eucharistic Adoration, click [here](#). To find parishes in our Archdiocese that offer Eucharistic Adoration, click [here](#).

Missionary Disciples - The Pope Video [Click Here >>](#)



- ✚ How can you be a missionary disciple in your daily activities?
- ✚ How does being a missionary disciple in your daily life help strengthen the Church?

- ✚ Why do you think Pope Francis speaks of the difference between proselytism and an encounter?

