

## A CALL TO PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus does not sugar-coat the cost of discipleship. He tells His apostles what to expect: there are two possible responses to those who proclaim the Gospel. Some will reject and persecute them; others will welcome and support them. Without saying it directly, Jesus asks each of us: **Which side are you on?** Will you be among those who reject God's servants, or among those who receive them with generosity? His answer is clear: *those who welcome them will not lose their reward.*

Being an apostle or prophet is a noble and blessed calling. Yet not all of us are called to preach publicly or serve on the front lines of missionary work. The good news is that God still invites us to share in the blessings of that mission by supporting those whom He sends.

The First Reading beautifully illustrates this truth through the hospitality of the Shunemite woman. At first, she simply offered the prophet Elisha a meal whenever he passed through her town. Later, she and her husband prepared a small room for him, furnishing it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. They expected nothing in return. Although she was childless and her husband was advanced in years, she never allowed her own needs to overshadow her generosity. She simply recognized a man of God and welcomed him with an open heart. In return, God blessed her with the son she had long desired.

Jesus echoes this same principle in today's Gospel: **"Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."** Whenever we welcome and support those who serve God, we participate in their mission. We grow in love, kindness, humility, and faith, while sharing in the fruits of their ministry. We also benefit from their prayers and spiritual support, especially those of priests, religious, and missionaries.

Supporting God's mission does not always require extraordinary sacrifices like those of the Shunemite woman. Jesus reminds us that even "a cup of cold water" offered to one of His disciples will not go unrewarded. God values not the size of the gift but the love with which it is given.

The life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux beautifully demonstrates this truth. She never travelled to the mission fields because poor health confined her to the convent. Yet today she is honoured as Co-Patroness of the Missions alongside St. Francis Xavier. Through her prayers, sacrifices, and countless small acts of love offered for missionaries throughout the world, she became a powerful partner in the Church's mission. Her life reminds us of a simple but profound truth: **Some give to the mission by going; others go to the mission by giving.**

The question, then, is not whether we are missionaries, but **how we can become partners in the mission.** We can pray daily for our priests, seminarians, religious, and missionaries. We can support appeals that care for clergy and sustain missionary work. We can encourage God's servants with a meal, a note of appreciation, or a kind word instead of criticism or gossip. We can also offer our daily sacrifices for the spread of the Gospel.

Hospitality begins at home. It teaches our children compassion, generosity, and respect for others. It creates a culture of sharing and opens our families to people from different backgrounds and cultures. Around the family table, faith, service, and love become natural conversations.

Hospitality also strengthens our parish communities. It helps newcomers feel welcomed, deepens the bond between clergy and laity, and encourages more people to become active members of parish life. In Canadian society today, where loneliness and isolation affect so many people, simple acts of welcome become powerful signs of God's love and help build stronger, more compassionate communities.

Hospitality transforms not only those who receive it but also those who offer it. By opening our hearts to others, we meet new people, gain fresh perspectives, and often discover unexpected joy in serving. Many lifelong friendships begin with one simple act of kindness.

Perhaps you may never wear the prophet's mantle, but God promises that you can still share in the prophet's reward.

This week, choose one concrete act of missionary hospitality. Pray for a priest by name. Support the mission fund. Write an encouraging note to someone serving the Church. Speak well of God's servants rather than joining in criticism. Small acts, done with great love, have eternal value.

As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: **"The house of a Christian should be a little church,"** where every guest is welcomed with dignity, kindness, and love.

Finally, let us remember the powerful words of Mother Teresa. Holding up her five fingers, she slowly pronounced each word of Jesus' teaching: **"You – did – it – to – Me."** She then added: *"At the end of your life, your five fingers will either excuse you or accuse you of 'doing it unto the least of these.'"*

May our hands always be open in welcome, our hearts generous in service, and our lives faithful partners in Christ's mission.

**Lord, make us partners in Your mission. Teach us to welcome, support, and pray for those whom You send. Amen.**