

We cannot but **SPEAK** about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:20



Reflection:

October 2021

The Church gives the faithful an incredible opportunity to renew their missionary commitment through World Mission Day, which falls on the penultimate Sunday of October. “The World Mission Day itself is not an isolated moment in the course of the year but rather a valuable opportunity to pause and reflect on whether and how we respond to our missionary vocation...” (Pope Benedict XVI, WMD 2011). This month, we focus on the verse Pope Francis has taken as the theme of this year’s World Mission Day.

The victory of evil was short-lived. On the third day, the rumblings in a tomb marked the beginning of a new era. Encountering the Risen Christ brought fresh hope to the wearied disciples, yet doubts remained. But the power and presence of God that descended on Pentecost made the valley of dry bones come alive. Peter preached and thousands believed. The man who was born lame experienced the power of the name of Jesus seeping into his body at the words of Peter and he leaped up and began praising God to the amazement of the onlookers. Peter spoke to those who gathered around about the Author of Life, Jesus, and thousands believed. Arrested for proclaiming the name of Jesus, they were brought before the same council that had, a few months earlier, condemned their Master to death.

If they had hoped to see a couple of men trembling before their authority, they were mistaken. Peter’s words were full of wisdom and boldness. There was no trace of fear in his heart that had once shuddered upon being recognised by a servant girl. His words were dignified but it marked an absolute faith in the name of Jesus as the only name that saves. They would have cringed on hearing Peter’s bold assertion that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was raised from the dead by God, and the lame man, now completely cured, was a proof of its authenticity. Their feeble attempts to threaten Peter and John were met with the same audacity. “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (v.19-20).

What is it that we see and hear? It is through what we see, hear, and think that we mainly feed our hearts. Our mouths overflow with what fills our hearts. There was no doubt to those who met the early apostles as to what filled their hearts - the Risen Christ, and the new way of life he wanted to establish in their midst. We have received the same Spirit; we have been given the same mission. A ‘perpetual state of mission’ can only emanate from a heart that is filled with gratitude for the deliverance from the dominion of darkness and the transference to the Kingdom of God. This mission has always been the hallmark of the Church that ‘exists to evangelise’. World Mission Day is a reminder for us to pause and ask – how much has this mission become the hallmark of our lives and the Jesus Youth fellowship to which we belong? Do we allow the same Spirit who animated Peter and John to work through us? Does a missionary outlook dictate what we watch and listen to? Does it influence the decisions that we make – regarding our state of life or career and how we order each day?

The same Spirit who nudged the apostles is nudging us - to be filled with Christ and to share Christ. “Even those who are most frail, limited and troubled can be missionaries in their own way, for goodness can always be shared, even if it exists alongside many limitations” (Christus Vivit, 239). Hostility and hardship may confront those who stand for truth. Yet, if we respond like the apostles in the strength of the Spirit, we will see that it is not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit that the mountains shall become level before the man of God (cf Zech 4:6-7). “May World Mission Day revive in each one the desire to go and the joy of “going” to meet humanity, bringing Christ to all” (WMD 2011).