



**A PASTORAL LETTER
from the Bishop of Lancaster for the
Extraordinary Month of Mission October 2019**

Baptised and sent

**Appointed to be read at all Masses in the Diocese of Lancaster on the
weekend of 5/6 October 2019**

My dear People,

The Extraordinary Month of Mission (EMM) is a special month of prayer and action called by Pope Francis to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter on overseas mission, *Missio Ad Gentes*.

It aims to respond to the ongoing, urgent call to bear witness to Jesus Christ to all the nations. It also, brings Catholics to a deeper awareness of their responsibility to evangelise.

It aims to renew missionary commitment throughout the Church, sent by Christ to reveal the love of God to all nations.

It aims to re-found and reshape Missio (also known as the Pontifical Mission Societies or PMS), in accordance with the demands of the Gospel.

At the request of the Missio Assembly of National Directors, the Holy Father approved the EMM on 31 March 2017, for the whole month of October 2019.

The Holy Father wants it to be an opportunity for reflection, prayer and support for the whole Church with specific regard to *Missio Ad Gentes*.

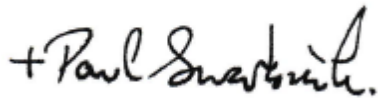
The Overseas Mission Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), has asked Missio to coordinate all activities related to the EMM. Missio will be at the service of the Church in England and Wales, providing expertise, materials and help to parishes.

For the four weeks of October 2019, four themes have been approved by the Holy Father:

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in his Church.
2. The witness of missionary saints and martyrs.
3. Biblical, catechetical, spiritual and theological formation for mission.
4. Missionary charity as a commitment to support the Church's missionary activity and communities too poor to support themselves, through Missio.

It is my wish to encourage us all to reflect on our work as missionary disciples. I am very much aware of the burdens constantly put on our priests, parishes and schools. My desire is for each parish to take up this EMM as you find yourself able. Primarily, let it be a time for reflection. I ask priests and deacons to build the given themes and aims of EMM into your homilies throughout the month. My personal hope is that we will come to appreciate more the privilege we have in sharing the salvific mission of Christ.

May the Lord bless you all, and help you to keep it simple!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Paul Swarbrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Paul Swarbrick
Bishop of Lancaster

More information can be found at <https://missio.org.uk/>

During October, Pope Francis invites everyone to join the EMM2019 Universal Prayer Chain, in solidarity and love for all people.

Who? Everyone, everywhere, all over the world is invited to pray the official EMM 2019 prayer.

When? Every Friday after the Angelus at 12noon, throughout the month of October.

Why? Through praying together, we will revitalise and reawaken our missionary spirit.

Universal Prayer

God our Father, when your Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he commissioned his followers to 'go and make disciples of all nations'.

Through our Baptism you send us out to continue this mission among all peoples.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be courageous and enthusiastic in bearing witness to the Gospel, so that the mission entrusted to us, which is still far from completion, may bring life and light to the world.

May all peoples experience the saving love and generous mercy of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.