

TWENTY NINTH SUNDAY - WORLD MISSION SUNDAY (100 Years)

October 17-18, 2026

Isaiah 45: 1, 4-6

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

Matthew 22:15-21

Theme: ONE IN CHRIST, UNITED IN MISSION

My dear brothers and sisters, welcome!

It is always my joy to see you on Sunday. Today is special. Today is **World Mission Sunday**, and this year we celebrate 100 years since Pope Pius XI gave us this Sunday in 1926. One hundred years of remembering that we are not just a parish in Mishawaka - we are a universal Church.

On this day we pray for missionaries and we give to support young churches in Africa, Asia, and beyond. And let me just say it from my heart: Thank you, America. Your generosity here is about 40% of the entire mission budget shared around the world every year. Every dollar you give, is highly appreciated.

I am a product of it. In Uganda, our major seminaries look like palaces - not because we are rich, but because you were generous. At Ggaba Seminary where I studied theology (2016 to 2020), we lived as happy seminarians. We lived as princes. That is why I want to remain a happy priest every day.

Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV gave us a beautiful theme this year: **ONE IN CHRIST, UNITED IN MISSION.**

That fits perfectly with our Gospel today. The Pharisees and Herodians - two groups who could not stand each other - team up to trap Jesus. "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?" It was a trick. If Jesus says yes, He loses the people. If He says no, Rome arrests Him.

Jesus asks for a coin. "Whose image is on it?" "Caesar's." And He says those famous words: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

Brothers and sisters, that coin had Caesar's image. But you and I, we have God's image.

Genesis 1:26 - 27, tells us: God said, "Let us make man in our own image." At baptism, we put on Christ's image. Every person in this church, young and old, born and unborn, all of us, we bear ONE image. We are ONE in Christ.

And because we bear God's image, we have two simple responsibilities.

First, the vertical. Give to God what is God's. That is a Sunday Mass. That is prayer. That is saying, "Lord, my life is Yours." Say, I will praise my God. I will serve my God. I belong to God.

Second, the horizontal. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. That is, be a good citizen. Be a good neighbor. Love your community. Love America. As Christians, we don't run away from the world; we transform it from inside.

That is our mission, and it has three simple faces:

1. **To Proclaim.** To tell someone, "Jesus is alive and God loves you." In Mishawaka, you don't need to go to Michigan or Texas to be a missionary. Your workplace, your family, your dinner table is your mission field.

2. **To Unite.** God does not love division. In our Gospel, the Pharisees and Herodians were divided. Jesus unites them to himself; he wants to unite us in Himself every day - as One family.

3. **To Transform.** Our goal is heaven, but we must bring a little heaven to earth now. Be happy and make others happy. By our generosity (the dollar you offer to support the mission, it paints a great joy in the heart of the receiver - like a seminarian in Uganda), by our good concern to them. When someone looks so lonely, feel free to reach them, smile with them, greet them and listen to their challenges.

We ask Mother Mary and St. Bavo, our patron saint, to pray for us, that we may truly remain ONE IN CHRIST, UNITED IN MISSION.