



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Participation and Mission Week 4 / Question 4

This is our final week of listening sessions – please join us! Here you will find questions for reflection, scripture passages for your reflection and preparation, and background information. Please bring any notes you have to your listening session. Choose whichever fits your schedule:

Session 1

Tuesday, March 8

7:30-9:30pm

Zoom (if needed, call the church
before Thursday for assistance)

Meeting ID: 845 8807 9940

Passcode: 523157

Or by phone: 301-715-8592

Session 2

Wednesday, March 9

6:30-8:30pm

Condon Hall, immediately
after the Soup Supper

Session 3

Sunday, March 13

10:00am-12:00pm

Condon Hall

Jesus said: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

For the purposes of our conversation, we are defining “evangelization” as expressing your faith through words and “mission” as living your faith through actions.

Main Question: How is God calling us to be a Christ-centered Church that is fully engaged in evangelization and mission?

Questions for prayer and reflection during the week, before attending a listening session...

- Since we are all missionary disciples, how is St. Ann’s (and the global Church) empowering each baptized person to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in their daily lives?
- What opportunities does St. Ann’s (and the global Church) offer to raise people up into leadership positions and form them for journeying together?
- At St. Ann’s, across the country, and around the world, how does the Church offer opportunities for those in leadership to listen and engage in dialogue with those they are journeying with?
- At St. Ann’s (and the global Church) how are we journeying, dialoguing, and collaborating, with members of other Christian denominations, people of non-Christian religious traditions, and people with no religious affiliation?
- What actions could really help us to move forward as a Christ-centered Church that is fully engaged in evangelization and mission?

John 13: 12-16

So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his

master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him.

Luke 10: 1-2, 8-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest... Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you,

cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'"

Acts 2: 1-8

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit

and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language?"

Background on Question 4

Missio Dei (mission) comes from the very nature of the Trinity as a community of persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – in a relationship of love and communion which overflows in creation and redemption. God is the creator and source of all life, and the cosmos is an expression of God's love. To participate in God's mission is to participate in the movement of God's love for people and for all creation, since God is the source of love.

The *missio Dei* is active in the evolution of the universe and in all history and cultures. God's mission is, however, revealed in a particular way in the history and scriptures of God's chosen people, Israel. This mission is fulfilled in a unique and unsurpassable way in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's mission continues in all peoples and cultures, and in all of creation.

The news of God's kingdom is manifest in the words and deeds of Jesus, and his disciples bear witness to this reality. The Church carries out its mission through its commitment to "presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer, and contemplation; interreligious dialogue, and finally, proclamation and catechesis." (Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue)

The call to conversion comes from God and is at the heart of the Gospel. Our response to this call is grounded in the discipleship of Jesus and nourished in community. Mission flows from the witness, life, and worship of the Christian community and the ways in which community includes those most in need.

Pope Francis has said, "I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of

transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation... As John Paul II once said... 'All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion.'"

Called to communion and mission through the sacraments, we are empowered to be "heralds of the Gospel," (Vatican II) a vocation sustained and nourished by a rich spiritual life, for the missionary is foremost a "person of prayer." The "Church exists in order to evangelize" and to live in communion with others and accompany others. We are instruments of the *missio Dei*, and God's Spirit touches all people in our world and calls them, whatever their religious tradition, to live life fully and faithfully.

The Church is a sign and sacrament, however, God's mission goes beyond the Church which is why we must be open, listening, and learning, acknowledging the Kingdom work done by others. Participation in the *missio Dei* in a world where many follow different religious traditions is about relationship, dialogue, and outreach for, while all have "a right to receive the Gospel," (Pope Paul VI) it will not be heard unless we engage in respectful dialogue with one another, mindful that the Spirit blows where the Spirit wills. This openness to other traditions can only enrich our lives and strengthen our communities. In these endeavors we "should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but 'by attraction.'" (Pope Francis) We are reminded that we serve and engage because we follow the One who gave us the example of his life, and it is his name we bear.