

CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Each month the Holy Father entrusts to the Apostleship of Prayer two prayer intentions that express his big concerns for humanity and for the Church. Together with committing ourselves to pray for them, the AP is responsible of spreading these intentions throughout the world to make more people accompany the Pope in his prayer. Praying together with him is the first symbol or expression of the AP's commitment with the mission of the universal Church.

In these intentions we can see the Holy Father's wise and authoritative view that calls our attention to worldwide issues that preoccupy him. It is truly a universal gaze, sensitive to the joys and sufferings of today's men and women, given his position as head of the entire Church. We consider them true challenges that confront our prayer and that should move our lives. They are in the first place challenges for our personal lives, as we are called to be consistent with what we pray for. They are at the same time invitations to approach during that month other people or institutions that work for the issue we pray for, be they Church institutions or not, establishing a partnership in favor of what concerns us both.

There are two types of prayer intentions: one is called Universal and the other Evangelization intention. The Universal intentions are on issues that can concern all people of good will, not only Catholics. They are for sure concerns of the universal Church, but they go beyond its boundaries. Basically they regard our desire for peace and justice in the world and the commitment of the Church with the situations described. The Pope himself invites us to pray and work for those issues, sending us out as a praying Church in an attitude of humble service and dialogue with the world. We are open to collaboration with people from other religions or that think different than us.

The Evangelization intentions, on the other hand, regard challenges for the life of the Church, showing the desire to make of her a better instrument for evangelization.

In this way, the mission of the Church is not something that will happen only in faraway countries. Everything in the Church is missionary. Both lists of prayer intentions are missionary, as their objective is that the baptized may better serve the mission of Christ in today's world, focusing on certain concrete challenges. To pray for them will open our perspective to world dimension, taking on the joys and hopes, pains and sufferings of our brothers and sisters.

In some countries, the bishops add a third prayer intention that will also be part of AP prayer service in that particular place.

