

## What Are Missions?

*from the writings of St. Gaspar del Bufalo*

What are Missions? They are a message sent by God. *Thus says the Lord* Let us listen to it with reverence. *Return to the Lord, your God, for gracious and merciful is he.* (Joel 2:13) Let us be reconciled to God ... *It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.* (Rom 13:11) Oh sinners, be converted to your God who is so benign, so merciful, who loves you so, who has been seeking you for a long time. Now is the time for you to set aside that worthless and evil-filled style of life; to put away those bad affairs, to end those scandalous ways, and to make retribution for stolen goods etc. *It is the hour.* How is it possible to have such coldness, such stupidity in so many Christians! This is the time when God is calling out to you, that God is showing you the disillusion of earthly things and that they are nothing more than sheer vanity. How is it that we cannot be awakened from that profound sleep of death that oppresses us! How can we be so deaf to the many words of advice! Oh! The ineffable goodness of our loving God who, rather than hurling bolts of lightning toward us in righteous justice and condemning us to perdition, is rather *moved with compassion* (see Luke 15:20) toward each sinner, as he exclaims: "Your soul is buried in vices and you are yourself your own tomb. Presently, the Lord is drawing near to you; he will let you hear his voice and he will lead you once and for all from that miserable state in which you exist. Oh misled soul, he calls out to you, he invites you, he encourages you, he arouses you by saying, *I say to you, rise.* (See Mark 2:11) Oh Christian, will you be even more insensitive than a dead person? God is commanding you to rise ... rise up. He is speaking to you - respond to him so that he can return you to life in the Church, your loving mother, who never wants her children, deadened by mortal sin, to be left weeping. My most beloved people, this is what a Mission is! In the Old Testament, God sent prophets - now he is sending us, the ministers of his sanctuary. This time, he is sending me to you my listeners. Weak, indeed, is the instrument that is being used, but I am consoled by the thought that his divine mercy will be evermore triumphant. The Lord was always accustomed to select weak subjects to do his work of bringing relief: *God chose the weak of the world.* (see 1 Cor 1:27) in order that all would be attributed to his divine power, as it is most fitting to do. Thus, he chose a Moses, a David etc. But then, you too, oh dearest mother Mary, will be my support before God etc. You, oh great Xavier, will obtain zeal for me; finally, oh guardian angels of all these souls who will be listening to me, you will be the defensive shield against the attacks of Lucifer etc.

Life goes by, day by day, and as a matter of fact, in so many measured seconds and no more; mercy and graces, too, are counted and numbered, and no more. As a consequence to this, note that one must take firm hold of the Holy Mission and with fullness of heart and decision of will to become holy. *Return to me with your whole heart;* (Joel 2:12) *Rend your hearts.* (Joel 2:13) Oh sinner, be courageous! God could have stricken you with an unexpected death - but no, because he wants you to be saved and hence is sending you another of his ambassadors - *Return promptly since if today you hear his voice* etc.(Psalm 95:8)

With a generous heart, be converted. *The kingdom of God suffers violence, etc.* (see Matt 11:12) This is how you are to receive this holy Mission and what dispositions you are to have. ... you must now place yourself in that state of soul that you would like to have at the time of your final moments."

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