

Beloved Thomas Achan, Priests, and my dear friends,

By now you all know what the importance of today is, right? It's Mission Sunday, a worldwide day for all Catholics, to support the mission activities around the world. The word 'mission' comes from the Latin verb mittere (MITARAE) which means to be sent out. This meaning ultimately shows when missionaries are being sent out into the world for a "great immense work of mercy, both spiritual and material," -quoted by Pope Francis.

Speaking of which, we don't fully realize how privileged we are living in our regular day lives. Going to school or work, Snapchatting or posting pics on Instagram, eating out at Panera, those are all actions that you can do, without having to worry about anything at all, maybe the occasional minor issue. However, there are people who are choosing to change their lives for those who don't have clean water to drink or food to eat. These missionaries are generously **offering their talents, creativity, wisdom, and experience** in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the people in need.

Maybe to us, they seem quite stupid for leaving all of these amazing things behind, but for those who live in these conditions, they are heroes. These missionaries, whenever I see them, seem to enjoy what they do since it's in their hearts to **provide support and assistance** for these people, the ones they serve.

However, are all of us called out to the same expectations? Are we supposed to travel across continents or visit prisoners at every possible moment? How are we supposed to

experience the missionaries' joy with our little time? This is what our CML founders envisioned for us many years ago.

Well, when India first got its independence back, most of the foreign missionaries had retired from their work and came back to their home countries. At this time that mission activities across the country got stagnated due to the scarce amount of dedicated missionaries there. Acting on this issue, His holiness, Pope Leo the 13th said these words that were the inspiration of Mr. Abraham Pallaattukunnel also known as late Kunjatan one of the founders of the Mission League. **“The Salvation of India is in her Son's itself”**.

Motivated by Pope Leo and Saint Alphonsa, Abraham decided to do something to boost the Mission activities across the subcontinent. After meeting another father who had the same interest in mind, they decided to start an organization, the “Cherupushpa” or Little Flower League ” to foster Vocation Promotion and to help Mission Activities across the country by means of **Man, Money and Prayers**.

Now, you may all be wondering, well why “Cherupushpa”? What was so special about this name that they wanted to name it after the whole organization? Well, the name Cherupushpa in fact means, “Little Flower” which is the nickname of a saint we are all very familiar with, Saint Therese! But then again, why her? Again, what is so special about Saint therese that made them want to pick her?

Well, in case you don't know, the mottos of the Cherupushpa Mission League are **Love, Renunciation, Service, and Endurance** all actions that Saint Therese showcased throughout her whole life. Even though there were multiple patrons of the Cherupushpa Mission League such as

Saint Alphonsa, Francis Xavier, and Saint Thomas, they chose the name 'Little Flower' since it was very easy to follow in the footsteps of this young saint.

Saint Therese of Lisieux was born in 1873 and lived a short yet **simple** life. Therese was drawn to God from a very young age, when she was just 14 on Christmas Eve in the year of 1886, she had a conversion that transformed her life and ultimately made her prioritize Jesus first. At the age of 15, she received special permission from her bishop to enter the Carmelite convent in Lisieux to give her whole life to God.

Throughout her life in the covenant, Therese was gifted with a great intimacy with God. Even through her sickness and dark nights of doubt and fear, she remained faithful to God, rooted in His merciful love. After a long struggle with tuberculosis, she died on September 30, 1897, at the age of 24. Her last words were the story of her life: "My God, I love You!"

The name "Little Flower" for Saint Therese came about since she often recognized herself as the "little flower of Jesus," mainly because she thought of herself as the simple wild flowers in fields, unnoticed by many, yet growing and constantly giving glory to God. Therese saw the world as God's garden, how each person was a different kind of flower based on their talents, skills, and capabilities. But the main point being is that with these skills, they gave glory to God in the ways best suited for them, and for her it was doing simple acts of kindness.

As CML students, we should all try to follow after Saint Therese's characteristics. Therese led a life of **humility, simplicity, and childlike trust in God**. By word and example, she shared this "little way of spiritual childhood" with the novices in her community. Not only that, she also lived a hidden, *simple* life of prayer.

Mission Sunday is a day for the children to encourage and experience their missionary spirit. It is to show how being part of the Cherupushpa Mission League is not by being the best of the best, it's all about the simple acts you do. And what better role-model is there than Saint Therese, the patron, for doing the ordinary, **with an extraordinary love for God**. As quoted by this blessed saint. "What matters in life, is not great deeds, but great love." And with this love, let us express our sincere gratitude from or all of the missionaries around the world.

Thank you