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Angelus: all Christians share in the mission for the world

Vatican City, 3 July 2016 – In this Sunday's Angelus, the Holy Father spoke of the need to invoke God, "the Lord of the harvest, to send out labourers into his harvest". "The 'labourers' of which Jesus speaks are the missionaries of the Kingdom of God, whom He Himself called and 'sent on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go'. Their task is to proclaim a message of salvation to all".

But this is the task not only of missionaries who travel far away, he emphasised; we too, missionary Christians, must say a good word for salvation. "This is the gift that Jesus gives us with the Holy Spirit. This announcement is to say: 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you' because Jesus has brought God closer to us; God became one of us; in Jesus, God reigns in our midst, His merciful love overcomes sin and human misery".

"And the Good News that the 'labourers' should bring to everyone is a message of hope and consolation, peace and charity. When Jesus sends His disciples ahead of Him in the villages, He advises them, 'Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house … Heal the sick in it'. All this means that the Kingdom of God is built day by day and already offers on this earth its fruits of conversion, purification, love and consolation among men".

Referring to the spirit in which the disciples of Jesus should carry out this mission, the Holy Father notes that the Gospel warns that they must be aware of the difficult and sometimes hostile reality that awaits them. "Jesus does not mince his words in this respect, when he says, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Hostility is always at the beginning of the persecution of Christians; because Jesus knows that the mission is opposed by the work of the evil one. Therefore, the worker of the Gospel strives to be free from human influences of every kind, carrying neither money bag, nor knapsack, nor sandals, as Jesus advises, instead relying solely on the power of the Cross of Christ. This means giving up all motives of personal pride, of careerism or hunger for power, and becoming humble instruments of salvation worked by Jesus' own sacrifice".

"The mission of the Christian in the world is a mission for all, a mission of service, which excludes no-one; it requires great generosity and in particular the gaze and heart turned heavenward to invoke the Lord's help. There is so much need for Christians who bear witness to the Gospel with joy in everyday life. The disciples, sent by Jesus, 'returned with joy'. When we do this, our heart fills with joy. This makes me think of how much the

Church rejoices when her children receive the Good News through the dedication of so many men and women who proclaim the Gospel day after day: priests – those good pastors that we all know – nuns, consecrated persons, missionary men and women – and I wonder how many of you young people who here in the square today hear the Lord’s call to follow Him? Do not be afraid! Be brave and carry to others this torch of apostolic zeal that has been passed to us by so many exemplary disciples".