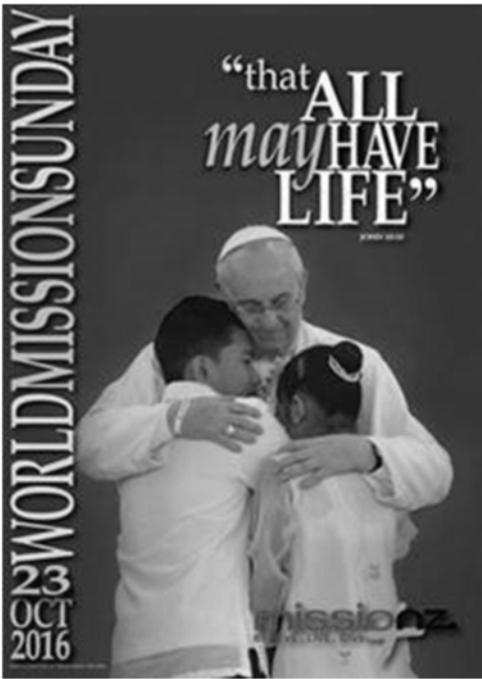


## THAT ALL MAY HAVE LIFE - A Reflection for 16 October 2016



In January 2015, Pope Francis visited the Philippines. He met two children called Jun and Glyselle who shared their life story with him before thousands of Filipino Youth gathered. They are not related to each other, but their common story brought them together. Both came from very poor families. Both were made to leave home because of their poverty. Both sought refuge in the streets at an early age before they were even 10 years old thinking that life as street kids was better. They survived by begging, scavenging food from waste bins. They slept on cold pavements and if they were lucky they ended up at times with cardboard boxes as their "mattress" for the night. Jun was able to finish his story, but Glyselle broke down in tears after her opening statements about her life. "Why is it that there are people who abuse children?" This question made her break down in tears. Unable to continue, both were led to Pope Francis who gave them a hug from the heart.

This is the story behind the Poster we find at the doorway of our church today as we start this week that will build up to **World Mission Day** on Sunday 23 October 2016. It carries the theme, **That All May Have Life**. Few moments after Pope Francis embraced Jun and Glyselle on that Sunday morning in Manila in 2015, he delivered a reflection to all present. He first asked for permission to speak in Spanish as he apologized his lack of ability to speak fluently in

English, moreover he added that when he wants to communicate from

the heart he speaks in Spanish. There was a resounding "YES" from the crowd. And then Pope Francis spoke about the unanswerable question uttered by Glyselle that morning. He explained that only when one breaks into tears can one find solidarity with those who cry because they experience the unanswerable mysteries in life.

Because tear is an expression of compassion. Compassion is one factor that enables a person to respond creatively to change reality. World Mission Sunday is a day of opportunity that allows us to reflect if compassion is one reality we have as believers. It is one truth in life that is present in every person who can be called a "missionary" because this inspires one to reach out and respond to a need. That need can be in me, in my family, in my neighborhood, in my faith community, or even in another foreign place beyond.

The gospel story today about the widow who sought justice from an unjust judge evokes this truth. I have been brought up to understand that this gospel story focuses its gaze on the idea of what a "judge" is. That God, unlike the "dishonest" judge in Jesus' story will not be slow to attend to the call of his subjects. But lately, the statement "But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" made me shift my focus. The insistent subject seeking justice has become the primary character of this gospel story — the widow; and I characterize her as God. Yes, the seeker of justice (the widow) is the God who continuously pleads and seeks for justice from the human person. The human person is the judge to whose heart God appeals.

God never gives up on any of his creatures. And God's Mission is to bring out the best in us humans that all may have life. Justice happens when humans enable the dream of God to become real in the here and now. A believer who is a missionary facilitates justice, that all may have life.

Jun and Glyselle, the children in our World Mission Sunday Poster 2016 today live in an orphanage administered and maintained by Catholics. They are also regular students in a local school. The Catholic Church in Manila assisted by benefactors has offered them, through the orphanage, an option to have a present and a future. Yes, the Mission of Jesus, "**That All May Have Life** (Jn 10:10) is also our mission. Do you strive to give life to yourself, to your family, and to others beyond your home? If you do, World Mission Sunday is your day to celebrate you're being a missionary. Make this week a special week for you, and let God's word motivate you, and may the Holy Eucharist that you will receive in this Mass during Communion strengthens you in all ways. May only goodness and kindness follow you all the days of your life!

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