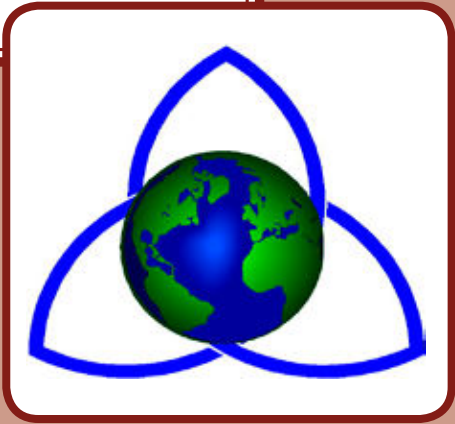




*Partners
Radiating
Mission*



Partners Radiating Mission

Opening Prayer

Reader: We come together in this circle of community
knowing that we are called into mission, into spiritlinking leadership.
Spiritlinking is building the circle of friends.
Spiritlinking is fostering networks of human compassion.
Spiritlinking is interweaving teams of relationship
and then...
new ideas are born...
new ways of responding to the mission
take form and find expression.

Excerpt from Spiritlinking Leadership, by Donna Markham, O.P.

Side 1 O Holy One,
You call us into mission
in a multitude of ways.

Side 2 Some of us travel around the earth
Some of us tend Your gardens
and Your vineyards nearer home.

Side 1 You call us and lead us into mission
and strengthen us for our ministry,
through the nurturing bonds of community
and the sustaining support of friends.

Side 2 May we be of one mind in our mission,
making Your Providence visible
through all that we are and do.

Side 1 Be with us all
as we struggle to do the ministry
of Your making.

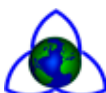
Side 2 And may we always stay in touch
with the power You place within us
and the peace which Your word proclaims.

Side 1 May we be there for one another
and take time to celebrate together
to pray together
to be providence together.

Side 2 Glory and praise to You,
Provident God
now and forever.

All Amen

Adapted from "A Psalm of Shared Mission and Ministry."
WomanWisdom by Miriam Therese Winter, p. 226



Mission

A discussion based on a PowerPoint presentation by Barbara McMullen, CDP

To set-up the context for a discussion on mission, we begin with a poem by David Whyte, *This Is Not The Age of Information*.

This is **not**
the age of information.

This is **NOT**
the age of information.

Forget the news,
and the radio
and the blurred screen.

This is the time
of loaves
and fishes.

People are hungry,
and one good word is bread
for a thousand.

As he says, “One good word is bread for a thousand.” Let us have that word be “Mission.”

What do think of when you hear the word mission? One of the most often related words is ‘call.’ Let us turn to the message of Anthony Gittins, CSSp. He tells us that the “origin of mission is God and that Jesus is God literally brought down to earth to continue God’s mission. So mission is who God is -- an extravagant Creator, a liberating Presence, and a reconciling Spirit. And, mission is what God does for a living. He:

reaches out,
gathers in,
embraces,
reconciles,
unites,
heals,
upholds,
renews and
transforms.

God has chosen us, in an act of great trust, to bring the mission to others.”

Father Gittins says that mission is God’s outrageous idea that God cannot operate without us. God chose to need us, God calls, invites and commissions us. So Gittins says that we don’t have the mission, the mission has us!

When you’ve experienced a call to something in your life, what are your responses? To question, to seek answers, to test it out with others, check with your friends or mentors, you think about it, sometimes you hope it goes away, and finally you settle into it. You say yes. But how do we know what that response look like? Gittins says, “Jesus is the mission brought down to earth. He shows us what mission is, the way mission is done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus is about evangelization: about “good newsing.” He doesn’t talk about healing and hope, He *is* healing and hope.” Jesus is in your face about mission His whole life!

So then our sort of job description, in light of mission, is discipleship. We’re called by Jesus to do what he did, be how he was. Discipleship is a summons, a call, to be communities who find their love for one another and others in the raw materials of daily life. It wasn’t apart from the messiness of life that Jesus proclaimed the goodness of God. It was right there with the lepers, the outcasts, the marginalized.



Discipleship requires us to do as Jesus has done. We must model ourselves on Jesus and how he does it. Authentic discipleship follows Jesus. We become the evangelization and the mission. Jesus expands everything to embrace all components, including the dust and mess that are intrinsic to evangelization. Through it all, Jesus is faithful to his Abba, his “Daddy,” his God. So if we are faithful, if we allow God to work in and through us, then the mission has us! We are gathered to be scattered. Not to keep it to ourselves, but to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. This is called evangelization.

Gittins says we need to think differently about evangelization. God sent mission down to earth in the form of Jesus. God’s mission became incarnate in Jesus, who came to do the will of his Abba. Jesus spreads God’s goodness in a way we can understand.

So, Jesus’ job description (not ours) is to be the evangelist. Evangelization is “good newsing,” that is, being the good news. Just like Jesus, making a difference one person at a time. Jesus looks for trouble and troubled people. He eats with sinners, he cures the ill, he dialogs with women.

So, if mission is God’s job description, and evangelization is Jesus’ job description, what is our role? Gittins says mission for us is discipleship. Our discipleship criteria is:

To live, you must choose love,
To love, you must choose to encounter,
To grow, you must suffer, and
Never give up hope.

On an individual level, we might ask ourselves: How am I being faithful to these four criteria? Am I challenged to conversion? And, which for the four criteria am I the weakest in?

If none of that grabbed you, here’s another way to think about mission. A river is like the mission of God. Each moment for us in the river is a moment of blessing because God is always blessing us, always calling us to mission, no matter where we are on the river. Our role is to be a part of mission because when we are in mission, we are in God’s dream. The river has its source, it own seasons. A river knows where it is going, even though it meanders.

Though each of us may be in a different place on the river and on a different boat, each of those places is a call. Sometimes the river flows freely and gently, and the carrying out of the mission comes naturally and is life-giving for the giver and the receiver. At other times the river is filled with rapids and those disciples need to hold on tight as they are tossed about.

Sometimes the river even runs dry. When that happens, boats need to be picked up and carried to where the river runs free. And, finally, the river reaches its destination, its end, and is absorbed into the sea. Like a river, mission calls us to let go, to be absorbed in something bigger than ourselves. You could think of the river being named “Providence.”

If the mission (God), Providence has us, then it goes to the ground of our being. It’s what makes us tick. It won’t tolerate the inauthentic. Mission will keep us looking at our deepest desires and teach us to trust that those desires for discipleship are in God’s heart, too.

Together we radiate the mission because we have the confidence to do what we never thought we could do, the courage to break free from all that holds us captive, and the attitude of openness to all the possibilities that God sets before us.

To summarize MISSION...

Know God has you...Participate in good newsing,
Life is messy...Pickup your boat and paddle a new course,
Get absorbed in something bigger than yourself,
Make Providence visible by radiating love,
Contribute your talents for the sake of mission, and
Be a disciple radiating hope!



MISSION

Based on the work of Anthony J. Gittins, CSSP, adapted by Mary Ellen Rufft, CDP

Although we, the Sisters and Associates of Divine Providence, as well as other religious communities, sometimes talk about our Mission, the truth is that we do not have a Mission. The reason is that Mission is what God is about. It's as if Mission were God's job description. God is the dynamic, interactive movement of goodness spreading out over the universe – that is Mission – that is God.

We can't have a Mission anymore than we can have God. What we can do, though, is immerse ourselves into God, and, therefore, into the Mission, into that dynamic movement of goodness.

Jesus is Mission incarnate, Mission come to earth. He is the Good News of God's Mission. If God's job description is Mission, the job description of Jesus is evangelization or doing the Good News. Our task, and that of the Church, is discipleship, that is, to be faithful to God's Mission. It would be accurate to say, then, that we do not have a Mission, but that God's Mission has us. In the same way, the Church does not have a Mission; God's Mission has the Church. God is the initiator; we, the Church, are the servants of the Mission. We carry out our role of discipleship by imitating the whole life of Jesus, by doing good news-ing as He did.

The primary ways we can do evangelization as Jesus did are by proclamation, witness, dialogue, and liberation. We are called to proclaim and witness the Good News. Proclamation is witnessing with words; witnessing is proclamation without speaking. Witnessing might involve martyrdom, i.e. living or dying for the Good News. It's about laying down our lives for others, not just by dying, but by allowing ourselves to be shaken, changed, converted, and/or recycled.

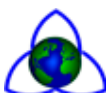
Dialogue is respectful, mutual discovery of, and conversion to, the Holy Spirit. It is a horizontal exchange, the outcome of which is new revelation. We often fear dialogue because it changes both parties in the process and its outcome cannot be controlled. Dialogue is incompatible with hierarchy. Jesus made Himself horizontal with the disciples when he washed their feet.

Responding to the call to be like Jesus is about foot-washing as well as Eucharist. It is about being willing to wash feet, but also to have one's feet washed. The latter is often more difficult than the former.

Liberation means setting free from any and all forms of unfreedom and injustice. It is what Jesus did throughout His whole public life. He set free whatever was bound, liberating others from the tyranny of injustice. He worked to obliterate the "isms" of His day. We are called to do the same, to recognize the prejudice and lack of justice in ourselves, our society, and our Church and to strive to overcome it. We can do so no matter what our vocation or ministry.

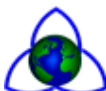
The preceding ideas are based on the work of Anthony J. Gittins, CSSP, presented to the General Chapter of the Sisters of Divine Providence on July 8, 2007. Adapted by Mary Ellen Rufft, CDP

Pause for quiet reflection on the meaning of MISSION



Questions for Reflection

1. What does this view of Mission mean to you and the Church?
2. How could we eliminate the “isms” of our day?
3. How does it connect with your understanding of Mission and Ministry?
4. What is your personal mission statement going to be?



Closing Prayer

- Leader:** In the spirit of Mother Marie, and as Providence women and men we are called to trust in divine Providence and so we say:
- Side One:** To strive for “that mind which was Christ Jesus” as we are present to the world through our service and through our mission of witnessing to God’s Providence.
- Side Two:** To imitate the combined gifts of contemplation and action as lived by Mother Marie—who was humble, gentle, and simple in the face of demanding duties; who had deep faith and total openness in accepting the will of God.
- Side One:** To be women and men committed to justice and peace, who stand in solidarity with the poor.
- Side Two:** To be people of prayer, called to conversion, growing in intimacy with our Provident God, and deepening our understanding of apostolic spirituality and mission today.
- Side One:** To be people who live our daily lives of hope and openness to the Providence of God.
- Leader:** As we open ourselves this day to being partners radiating mission let us pray together:
- All:** We exalt your providence, O God, and we commit ourselves to making providence more visible in our world...With fidelity, living as responsible stewards of the earth and our gifts; with courage, confronting the evils and injustices of our times; with compassion, entering into the joys and sufferings of your people; with hope, collaborating in mission to foster your reign on earth.
Amen.

